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COMMONWEAL

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DIOGENES ALLEN on Louis Dupré

ROBERT GILLIAM on 'Voices from the Catholic Worker'

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM Religious booknotes yet again!

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WHITE DOCTOR, BLACK MUSIC

What Goldberg's mbira taught me

Sondlo Leonard Mhlaba

THE PRESIDENT & THE PROTESTER

Dick is dead, Phil's in jail

JOE LERSKY

WHY DID CHIAPAS REBEL?

The making of an explosion

Charles R. Simpson & Anita Rapone

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CORRESPONDENCE

Spring fever?

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: It may have been the weather—I read the whole May 6 issue walking to work in Brooklyn on a glorious spring day—but I think this issue of *Commonweal* was one of the best I have ever seen from any magazine. My congratulations. ANNE PILSBURY

Thanks from 'Madeleine'

Address withheld

To the Editors: I am grateful to the people who read my article ["Giving Up the Gift: One Woman's Abortion Decision," February 25] and felt moved to respond with letters, either to *Commonweal* or to me personally. I was truly surprised by the compassion of so many readers.

Before the publication of this essay, I felt there was no place for someone like me to be heard within the church—that I somehow fell between the cracks. I am glad to have been found wrong. The only way I could heal was to bring others with me to that awful place where I had been; only then could it lose its power. And that, I believe, is ultimately what Jesus' life means: that we never have to face life's torments all alone.

It was gratifying to hear from a number of priests. But their empathy on this issue and their eagerness to forgive may still be well-kept secrets. I hope they will help the "Madeleines" in their areas to find them.

Thank you, readers, for showing me that the spirit of Christ is very much alive in the members of the church.

"MADELEINE GRAY"

The truth about Sidney

East Orleans, Mass.

To the Editors: I can see from his fulsome endorsement of gay marriage ["Why I Changed My Mind," April 22] that Sidney Callahan is a very nice man. But is he really as nice as he could be?

More than thirty years ago Walker Percy pointed out that Ozzie and Harriet are nicer than Christians (*The Moviegoer*). Try as they may, Christians simply can't measure up to the standard set by Ozzie and Harriet and by their heirs, the politically correct.

Sidney Callahan has got rid of most of his Christian baggage, but until he sheds the few remaining rags and tags, he won't be thoroughly nice. DAVID LIGHT

From the editors: Without taking sides on the merits of "Why I Changed My Mind," we welcome this opportunity to get the matter of Sidney Callahan's gender out of the closet. She is not a nice man.

A waste of energy

Springfield, Mo.

To the Editors: Down here in southwest Missouri the all-pervading presence of our brothers and sisters of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Assemblies of God helps us Roman Catholics maintain a semblance of sanity when it comes to such topics as homosexual marriage. Would that Sidney Callahan shared this immeasurable blessing! I've spent much of the day wondering what might compel Ms. Callahan to address her considerable intelligence and refined feminine sensibilities to a subject of such limited scope and dubious importance. Why spend precious time and energy on a thesis so totally devoid of any merit vis-à-vis natural law, Christian morality (Bishop Spong to the contrary notwithstanding), and the very nature of things. I'm aware that compassion can befuddle logic, but morality has nothing to do with emotion. (REV.) FROWIN BROWNFIELD

Imitating Rome on sex

Wyandotte, Mich.

To the Editors: I empathize with Sidney Callahan's impatience with the present position of the Vatican on birth control. The open discusson we pray for would surely

(Continued on page 28)

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Also, participate in *Commonweal*'s Religion and Media Forum, Thursday, June 9 (details and ticket information, page 17).
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COMMONWEAL

CONTENTS

Volume CXXI, Number 11

Correspondence:	2
Editorials:	3
Differing legacies: *Joe Lersky*	5
Relief into joy: *Rosemary Ridd*	6
A shaky coalition: *Leo J. Wollemborg*	8
Murders most foul: *John Perrotta*	8
Generations aren't seamless: *Abigail McCarthy*	9
Announcing early: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*	11
White doctor, black music: *Sondlo Leonard Mhlaba*	13
Poetry: *Jean Gallagher*	14
Why did Chiapas revolt?: *Charles R. Simpson and Anita Rapone*	16
Screen: *Richard Alleva*	19
Art: *Karen Sue Smith*	20

BOOKS

Medieval Lives, by Norman F. Cantor/The First Jesuits, by John W. O'Malley: *Carl L. Bankston III*	22
Passage to Modernity, by Louis Dupré: *Diogenes Allen*	24
Voices from the Catholic Worker, by Rosalie Riegle Troester: *Robert Gilliam*	25
Religious booknotes: *Lawrence S. Cunningham*	26
The family that fights together...: *William Houghton*	31

STAFF

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Publisher: Edward S. Skillin

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The euthanasia follies

Two courts have declared for physician-assisted suicide. On May 2, a Michigan jury acquitted Dr. Jack Kevorkian, who had been indicted on a charge of assisting the suicide of a thirty-year-old man suffering from a degenerative nerve disease. A day later, a federal district court judge in Seattle found unconstitutional a Washington State law prohibiting assisted suicide, including physician-assisted suicide. While the Kevorkian trial seemed in news reports to combine an episode from a soap opera with snippets from a high school debate—a tear jerker seasoned with sophomoric reasoning—the federal court decision is another matter.

The confusions of the Kevorkian trial—as confusing perhaps to the jurors as to the rest of us—call the acquittal into question. Dr. Kevorkian certainly assisted Thomas Hyde in dying, but apparently not on the site where the body was found. This technicality, which police and prosecutor might have dealt with beforehand, the judge ruled exculpatory. Dr. Kevorkian, who otherwise plays the role of principled advocate for physician-assisted suicide, chose in this trial both to rely on the venue technicality and to blur the issue of assisted suicide by claiming he was merely helping Mr. Hyde to control his pain; as evidence he offered a video of the suicided man asking to have his pain relieved. Seeming to have little solid instruction in the law from either judge or prosecutor and weeping on the dead man's behalf, the jurors decided that if he died in the process of trying to control his pain that was okay with them. So much for the rule of law in the state of Michigan.

But this ill-conceived effort at jury nullification pales in light of the decision announced the following day, May 3, by Federal Judge Barbara Rothstein. Her decision not only legalizes euthanasia but declares it a constitutionally protected right. In an exercise of judicial nullification, she overturns the decision of Washington State voters in 1991 to vote against Initiative 119 which favored physician-assisted suicide. Furthermore, the judge collapses any distinction between allowing to die and direct killing by finding no constitutionally meaningful difference between the withdrawal of life-sustaining medical treatment and the provision of the medical means to end life in the case of terminally ill, competent patients. In effect, the judge rules, there is no legal difference between removing a respirator and injecting a lethal overdose of morphine.

The judge finds warrant for her opinion in the Fourteenth Amendment support given *Roe* v. *Wade* by the Supreme Court in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, where it was dealing with a woman's right to choose an abortion: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State." Judge

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Rothstein finds the argument in Casey "almost prescriptive" on the matter of allowing a terminally ill person to have physician assistance in committing suicide.

The unrelenting logic of Judge Rothstein's decision verges on the simplistic. Charles Krauthammer aptly observes: "This is not a slippery slope. It's a cliff" (*Washington Post*, May 13, 1994). Having enunciated this newly found constitutional right, the judge also cavalierly dismisses objections that the right will be claimed by others than the suffering, competent, terminally ill who request that a physician kill them. After all, if this is "a right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe," why isn't it a right, given time and human proclivities, that will be claimed by others suffering but not terminally ill; why isn't it a right that will be visited upon still others—incompetent, poor, old, or nonproductive? Judge Rothstein did make one defensible decision. She let the current law stand pending appeal. We dare to hope that the Supreme Court, which has had to perform a high wire act to preserve *Roe*—the most flagrant example of legislating from the bench—will correct Judge Rothstein's logic and her folly.

R.I.P.

The death of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis reminded Americans of a time when our politics was full of hope and our future full of possibilities. Memory of that time has dimmed: an exuberant sense of national purpose tarnished by the violence of a terrible war and the corruption of the public trust. The brutal assassination that left Mrs. Kennedy a widow at the age of thirty-three exposed the darker corners of human nature that American naiveté and exceptionalism prefer to keep at bay. The first lady's stoic grace and sense of purpose in the days following John Kennedy's death held the country together; never since have we been so completely and wholeheartedly gathered as a nation.

Her death on Thursday, May 19, brought back those images of a black-veiled young woman with two small children and a riderless horse. It evoked a sense of our vincibility and mortality. It recalled the woman who in 1963 and in the thirty years since personified a dignity and probity now sadly diminished in our leaders and our culture. May she rest in peace.

THE PRESIDENT & THE PROTESTER

DIFFERING LEGACIES

DICK IS DEAD, PHIL'S IN JAIL

My wife and I were moseying along en route from Ohio to the East Coast when on April 21 for no particular reason we found ourselves in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. That evening the local paper reported the conviction of the last of four defendants—"members of a group named Plowshares"—involved in the willful damaging of an Air Force jet last December.

I hadn't realized this sort of stuff still was going on. Plowshares seemed a name out of a long-dead past. But apparently not. The article's next-to-last paragraph noted that among the three earlier convicted defendants was "longtime peace activist Philip Berrigan, 70."

The manly version of Catholicism

Reports indicate that disputes over the use of inclusive language had a great deal to do with the long delay in the official publication of the English translation of the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (previously and extensively analyzed in *Commonweal*, March 12 and May 7, 1993). Herewith the first paragraph of the first section of the draft version, followed by the now-approved final version.

Draft Version

I. To Live Is to Know and Love God

1. God's own perfection and happiness are infinite. In the plan of his good pleasure, the Father freely created the human race to share his blessed life and so is close to us at all times and in all places. He calls us and helps us seek, know, and love him with all our strength. God gathered the human race, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the church, through his Son, whom he sent in the fullness of time to redeem and save us. Through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, the Father invites us to become his adopted sons and daughters and heirs to divine happiness.

Final Version

I. The Life of Man—to Know and Love God

1. God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his children and thus heirs of his blessed life.

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The next day Richard Nixon died. On the TV screen in our motel room, a grim-faced Dan (or maybe it was Peter or Tom) marveled at the dichotomous nature of the newly departed, his incessant movement back and forth between triumph and disaster. Nixon, he said, was the most fascinating and complex public figure of our time.

Guest commentator Henry Kissinger then cited Nixon's blend of rationality and creativity in foreign affairs, lauding the president who saved untold numbers of lives by finally ending the Vietnam War and whose precedent-shattering journey to China had redrawn the world's political topography and increased its livability quotient. All unspecified "problems" aside, Kissinger said, at least this portion of Nixon's reputation would remain unsullied and secure.

Unmentioned was the fact that the war was ended in 1973 only after five years of secret "incursions," saturation bombings, and other acts of wanton destruction, or that the terms of the "peace with honor" Nixon claimed to have attained were little different from what had been available when he took office. Similarly overlooked was the reason why an opening to China was necessary or even possible in 1973: Twenty years of political charlatanism marked by Nixonian insistence that, while Communists were clearly visible within every domestic shadow, their presence could be safely denied at the helm of the most populous country on earth.

Blessed are the peacemakers, implied Henry Kissinger, who—one-half of a Nobel Prize notwithstanding—was not and is not one of them. Phil Berrigan, who was and is, surely would agree.

The crazy, flaming, and tragic 1960s cannot be imagined; they had to be lived. Opponents of the war were everywhere, marching, disrupting, filling prisons, sometimes setting off bombs and getting shot, mounting a defense—or trying to—in courtrooms across the land. Their efforts convinced one now-dead president to forgo a reelection bid and set the stage on which another (now also dead) eventually fled office in advance of an impeachment mob. What opponents of the war did, finally, was save lives; what they failed to do, despite moments of high hopes, was change the world.

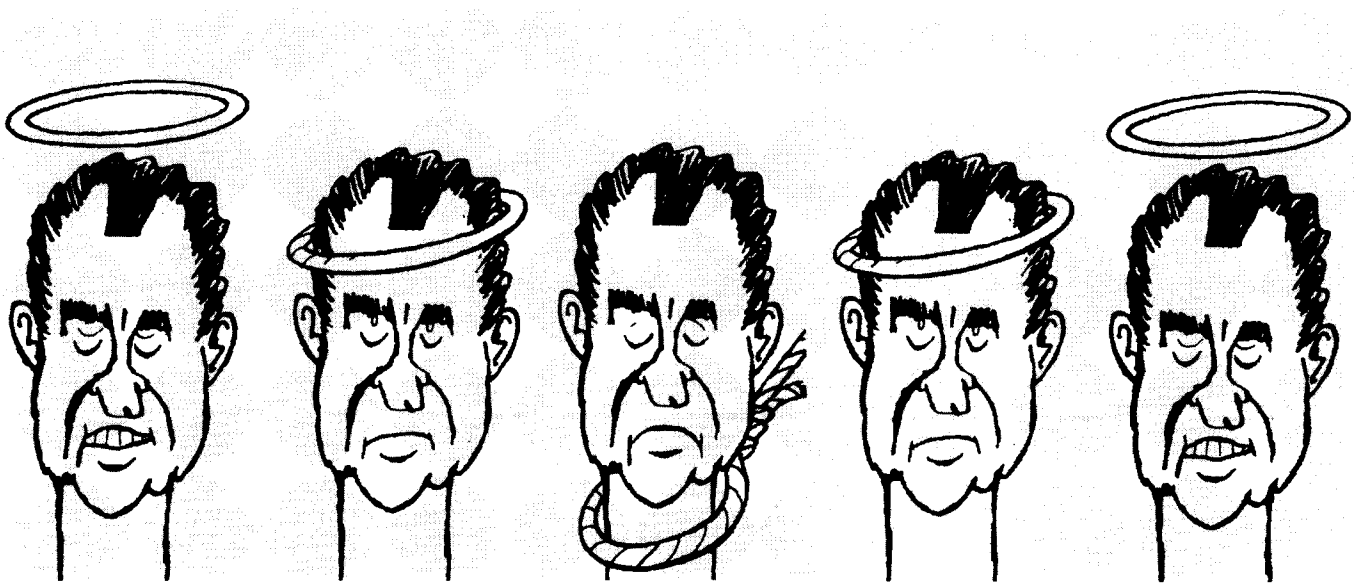
Phil Berrigan and his fellow priest and brother, Dan, were leaders of Plowshares, one small movement faction that, in place of bomb-building and bluster, based its actions on the word of the Son of the God of Christian love. In the old days, the Berrigans were front-page news, especially when they and seven associates were convicted after a vituperative trial in Catonsville, Maryland, of damaging draft board files by pouring blood over them, an action that served both as a metaphor for the war's victims and for the waning life force of a certain Lamb. The war machine has survived of course, as has Phil Berrigan, though the Elizabeth City 4, as his latest escapade is known, was not covered to my knowledge by the national press.

Other differences also abound. The Soviet Union no longer poses its quasi-fictional threat, the Gulf War was a redeeming triumph (except perhaps for the Iraqi children and other civilians who were in the wrong place when the smart bombs fell), the Iran-*contra* scam has come and gone, the United States has become the leading arms supplier of the entire planet, and Richard Nixon has reinvented himself one last time. Revered elder statesmen do not need expletives to be deleted. Young American men no longer are dispatched home in body bags, the streets and campuses are quiet, and Phil Berrigan is without allies. Almost.

His co-defendants this time were thirty-four, thirty, and twenty-four, ages at which idealism has been known to flourish. Its light usually dims later, however, and it seems both inconsolably sad and deliriously uplifting to realize that at least one man of seventy still finds cause and strength to refight the worthy battles he originally lost years ago.

But the flags are at half-staff—Richard Nixon is dead. His friends and foes have wept together on a national day of mourning ordered by Bill Clinton, who once marched at least figuratively with the Berrigans and now has concluded that Nixon was "a fierce advocate for freedom and democracy around the world" and "an inspiration to us" all.

Kissinger at the funeral maintained that his former boss's



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"long and sometimes bitter journey [has] ended in reconciliation," and Clinton urged that "the day of judging President Nixon on anything less than his entire life come to a close."

Nixon would have loved it. And, to give him his due, he also would have understood Clinton's perceived need to honor the politically expedient at the expense of the true.

By all means let us judge the departed by his entire life—the foul, Red-baiting campaigns of the early years; the destruction of reputations and lives; the "Southern strategy" that further split an already divided nation; the attempt to turn the Supreme Court into a citadel of incompetence; the piles of corpses, both Indochinese and American; the secrecy, duplicity, and political conniving; the fervent belief—one of few to be substantiated—that presidents exist above the law.

Yes, he was fascinating and complex, the devious frequently are, which is why Kurtz is more interesting than Marlowe, Iago than Othello. Hell, a strong case can be made for the claim that the Wicked Witch of the West was the most captivating character in *The Wizard of Oz,* but when she died, nobody pretended that she was anything but a witch.

So on the one hand, beneath the sod of Yorba Linda, there is the dead Richard Nixon, his primary legacy the sanguine knowledge that James Madison was an ass and the Constitution exists mainly to be subverted when the moon is right or the need arises; and on the other, jailed in North Carolina, the live Philip Berrigan, paying one more time the price of an unswerving devotion to the message of Jesus Christ. Berrigan is scheduled for sentencing July 5. If his basic precepts are correct, Nixon already has submitted to another, greater judgment.

JOE LERSKY

Joe Lersky is the retired managing editor of the Daily Standard, *Celine, Ohio.*

REPORT FROM SOUTH AFRICA

RELIEF INTO JOY

AND NOW FOR THE PROBLEMS

Euphoria was the word that best summed up the mood in South Africa last month when world leaders assembled for the presidential inauguration of Nelson Mandela and his two deputies. South Africa had ceased to be the pariah of the world. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali formally welcomed the new South Africa at the inauguration lunch, and Douglas Hurd, British foreign secretary, intimated the country's rapid reincorporation into the Commonwealth. The days leading up to this felt reminiscent of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Barriers were coming down all over the place, culminating with the opening of the National Assembly on May 9 when Mandela crossed the floor to embrace Mangosutho Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom party and then proceeded to greet General Constand Viljoen whose Freedom Front had won sufficient votes to fight in Parliament for an Afrikaner *volkstaat* (homeland).

South Africa was a nation ready to celebrate. There were two prevailing emotions. The first was *relief,* intense relief. Whites in particular had been stockpiling goods—ammunition, tinned foods, bottled water, and household items—ready to barricade themselves against power failures or whatever else might happen when the blacks took over. But after years of tension and violence, weeks of pervasive media coverage of the election campaign, and then the extreme Right bomb attacks immediately preceding the election, at the end of the first day of voting on April 26—set aside for the old and infirm—the country heaved a huge sigh of relief. The election had begun and there had been no conflagration.

This gave way to the second emotion: *sheer joy.* For the majority who voted for the first time, there was willingness to stand in lines all day if necessary, and even in some areas to come back again the next day where ballot papers had not been delivered. The media honed in on octogenarians whose lives had been fulfilled by putting their first cross on a ballot paper. I even found a white woman who felt this had been her first free vote, that only now had her vote really counted.

But while many South Africans were ecstatic about their liberation, the experience was not the same for black as for white. For blacks there was the expectancy of imminent improvements in their lives, and a full sharing in the resources of their country. For whites it was a liberation from guilt, and, accompanying this, the relief that nothing much had changed. On the television there were the same reassuring white commentators, along with a few black faces. The news is still presented from a largely white perspective. In Parliament—and in the cabinet—there is the the comfortable assurance that F.W. de Klerk of the National party (NP) is there to oversee proceedings and Derek Keys continues as finance minister, ensuring there will be no drastic change in economic policy. Even the entrance of an *imbongi* (praise singer) in traditional African dress at the opening of Parliament could be absorbed into white consciousness as a new craze.

It has been little noticed that while de Klerk talks about forgetting the past, Mandela speaks more about forgiveness; indeed he stresses the importance of *knowing* the past. While he is prepared to take the NP's claim to be a *new* National party seriously and to applaud de Klerk for the changes he has initiated, Mandela, in one of his speeches on inauguration day, reminded his audience that not so long ago de Klerk had chided the late Dannie Craven and other members of the South African Rugby Board for going to Lusaka to talk to Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) in exile.

In this, Mandela may be echoing one of his new cabinet members, Professor Kader Asmal, who, in his inaugural address as the first chair in human rights law in 1992, spoke of the crucial importance of knowing the past in order to understand it, and as part of a cathartic process of working through it to mend individual and collective broken psyches. At Asmal's University of the Western Cape (built outside Cape Town as a segregated institution for colored students), the Mayibuya Centre has

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been set up as an apartheid museum. Conceived by the Vice-chancellor, Jakes Gerwel, now appointed to head President Mandela's staff, its purpose is to recover the lost history of black South Africans.

South Africa has a formidable task of physical reconstruction—given 40 percent unemployment, 60 percent illiteracy, and millions of homeless as well as the rebuilding of lives broken by injury, bereavement, and loss of property, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and parts of the Transvaal. For this the ANC has proposed an expensive reconstruction and development program.

But there are also issues arising out of the seeming miracle of *peaceful* change. In most newly independent countries there has at least been the symbolic overthrow of the old regime, even if it reappears as neocolonialism. The NP, whose acts of racism have been compared with those of Nazi Germany, has a history of which much is still to be revealed. There is to be no Nuremberg-like trial, but it will be necessary to know more, for example, about the "dumping grounds" where Africans in the thousands were transported from the Western Cape to wasteland areas, and where hundreds of infants died as a result. Parents of those children will need to come to terms with living in a country where the present leader of the National party remains influential.

There is the particular irony of Cape Town becoming the capital of the one province to vote an NP majority to its new provincial legislature. For decades the Cape had stood against apartheid through the preponderance of its liberal English-speaking white voters. Now there are fears of instability, and even talk of the province becoming an informal *volkstaat*, with Afrikaners from the Transvaal moving in (they are already buying homes there). Given the provincial NP leader, Hernus Kriel, until recently a most unpopular minister of law and order, and not known for diplomatic skills, and a rapid inward migration of blacks into squatter camps like Crossroads, the Cape is certainly a place to be watched.

The main concern is the possibility of racial tension between African and colored. The victory of the NP was blamed on the colored vote. As the largest population group in the region, coloreds were bombarded during the election campaign with NP advertising fomenting old fears of *swart gevaar* (black danger) and communism should an ANC government win.

The very existence of a colored population represents a legacy of white domination, an artificial "race" created by British colonialists in the nineteenth-century Cape when coloreds were classified as neither European nor native. While in urban areas colored homes, schools, pensions, and wages were better than those of Africans, coloreds were made to suffer all the indignities of petty apartheid as "non-whites." In Cape Town they lived in the shadow of the whites as a sort of underclass. While many looked to whites for protection, it remains little known that the colored community contained some of the most radical political thinkers, with an intellectual tradition of rejecting the very existence of "so-called coloreds" as a separate group and establishing of a tradition of boycotts, taken up by the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the 1980s.

In 1976, colored schoolchildren had demonstrated on the streets of the Cape Flats townships following the Soweto massacre. And in 1983 Mitchells Plain, an enormous colored township outside Cape Town comparable to Soweto, was chosen for the launch of the UDF.

But since 1990, with the release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC and other organizations, the prospect of real change of power has brought fear. And the community, never a cohesive one, has become still more unsure of itself.

This was illustrated on the Saturday following the election, a day of restlessness caused by the delays in the election results. With talk that there might be some news on the Grand Parade in central Cape Town, I made my way there to find a small gathering of people, most of them colored, divided into two groups by a line of peace monitors. On one side were about 500 ANC supporters, on the other perhaps 150 NP supporters.

Nothing much was happening, but the peace monitors looked solemn, perhaps tired. The press was there, desperately looking for a story. Some ANC people started shouting "*Hotnot, Hotnot*" (Dutch for Hottentot) at the NP lot, and the latter retorted, rather lamely, "Bushmen, Bushmen." The press got excited and brought out the microphones. Shortly afterward, as it was getting dark, the peace monitors broke their chain and went home and the group merged together.

Later, this event was reported in the media as a major incident of racial tension between African and colored, a sign of things to come. No one in the media seemed to have noticed that it was mainly coloreds who were shouting at one another. I asked a friend I had been with why she had joined in taunting the NP group as "*Hotnot*" when she herself had been subject to this abuse from whites in the past.

It was precisely because white nationalists, especially the police and farmers, had derided the coloreds in the past as *Hottentots*, that now the ANC was taunting coloreds who had voted for the NP for making themselves lackeys to their old oppressors. And why had NP supporters shouted back "Bushmen"? Because, my friend said, Africans used to call the coloreds Bushmen, "and now they say we are siding with the Africans."

The event told me a lot about the importance of having a new understanding of South African society, in this case for colored people themselves to recognize how they have been manipulated. The same friend spoke of what she wanted most out of the new South Africa as an understanding of who she is as a colored person. This itself will involve time for reconstruction out of the present environment in which the Khoi (*Hottentots*), the original inhabitants of the Cape who intermixed with white settlers and their slaves, are not yet acceptable as symbolic ancestors, and where the radical political tradition of the Cape has been to deny the validity of a colored group on intellectual grounds.

South Africa rejoices; its people need Mandela's charisma to lift their spirits out of the morass of forty-five years of apartheid and over 300 years of white rule. They need this for the long road ahead of them to break their way through old barriers to the new South Africa. ROSEMARY RIDD

Rosemary Ridd, a social anthropologist and a member of Wolfson College, Oxford, is doing research this year in Cape Town.

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A SHAKY COALITION

HOW FAR TO THE RIGHT?

In Italy's general elections last March, the Italian Left missed its best opportunity in fifty years to gain national power. Instead, a political newcomer, media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, and his three-month-old, right-of-center party, *Forza Italia*, emerged as the largest political force. Compared by many to Ross Perot in the United States, Berlusconi appealed successfully to the millions of middle-of-the-road, patriotic-minded voters who felt politically homeless as huge corruption scandals devastated the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, and the other traditional governing parties.

The new Berlusconi government, the first right-of-center coalition to win national power since World War II, has pledged to create a million new jobs within a year. Its program calls for fiscal incentives, mainly for small and medium-sized enterprises, and for freeing private concerns from the state regulations and red tape that weigh down the Italian economy. There are some two hundred taxes and levies, many of which cost more to collect than they add to the treasury. Experts close to the new government want to do away with most of them, as well as to overhaul the present income tax system. There are now a dozen different income tax rates, ranging from 10 to 51 percent. The plan is to replace them with a flat tax rate of 33 percent for everyone, but to include generous deductions for those with low incomes. The big question is whether this plan and the new government's desire to loosen the state's grip on the economy will run into the same problems that Ronald Reagan's did in the United States (bigger deficits) or that Latin American governments have experienced in downsizing state-owned companies (higher unemployment).

Thanks in large part to its still efficient party machine, the former Communist party (now known as the Democratic Party of the Left, or PDS), retained its role as the biggest opposition force. But this was small consolation and has led to much soul-searching and pressure for changes in the PDS's leadership and policies. The party now seems determined to conclude in the not-too-distant future the long march of Italian communism toward Westernization by unambiguously endorsing the free market and Italy's participation in international alliances led by the United States. Meanwhile, the Christian Democrats (CD), renamed the Italian Popular party (PPI), have been weakened further by internal splits that followed the party's poor electoral showing. A splinter has joined the Center-Right coalition supporting

Murders most foul

The assassination on March 19 of a Roman Catholic priest near Naples who had spoken out against the mob stunned a nation still recovering from the shock of another murder of an outspoken priest last September in Sicily.

The murders appear to be the reaction of the Sicilian-based Mafia and one of its mainland cousins, the Naples-centered Camorra, to the decline of its traditional power base—the scandal-ridden and now defunct Christian Democratic party—and to a church slowly taking an assertive stance against the mob.

The cold-blooded shooting of the Reverend Giuseppe Diana, thirty-six, took place in the sacristy of his parish church in the squalid town of Casal di Principe, north of Naples, as he prepared to say Mass. It came only four days after Diana and other priests had testified before magistrates about the Camorra's ties with local politicians, administrators, businesses, and vote-fixing. In 1991, Diana and six other priests had signed a statement condemning the Camorra as "terrorists" and "the plague," and had urged their fellow priests to speak clearly "in their homilies and on all those occasions requiring courageous testimony." Investigators quickly established a link between the Camorra and the slaying of Father Diana.

The other assassinated cleric, the Reverend Giuseppe Puglisi, fifty-six, was a parish priest in the Mafia-infested neighborhood of Brancaccio in Palermo, Sicily. He was shot in the back of the head as he was entering his house. Puglisi's unpardonable sin was to upset the equilibrium of the neighborhood by creating alternatives to mob crime. He did this by dissuading young girls from prostitution, by setting up a sports facility for young people, and by operating a community center that helped people find honest jobs. Puglisi also refused to permit unrepentant Mafia members from serving as godparents at baptisms.

While the Italian state has increased armed escorts and other protection for priests at risk, neither the Vatican nor the Italian bishops' conference took immediate concrete action as a result of the assassinations. Pino Arlacchi, a Mafia expert at Florence University, predicts more assassinations: "The church hierarchy has lent very little support to local-level priests, beyond occasional papal declarations," he said. "I expected much more."

JOHN PERROTTA

John Perrotta is a free-lance journalist who lives in Rome.

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the new government. Other former CDs may soon move in the same direction, as Berlusconi continues his campaign to woo the Catholic vote after setting up a new cabinet post for family affairs.

Over the short term, the main troubles for Berlusconi seem likely to come from within his governing coalition. The secessionist-minded Northern League has peaked in popularity, even in its strongholds in the Po Valley. But its leader, Umberto Bossi—who is now under criminal investigation for possibly illegal campaign funding—has toned down but not given up his demand for a greater role in the government nor his plans for turning Italy into a confederation of separate republics rather than into a federation of autonomous regions. The third partner in the coalition, the National Alliance (NA), includes the neo-Fascist *Movimento Sociale Italiano* and minor rightist groups. Its leader, Gianfranco Fini, seems content for now with having his party recognized as a responsible, democratic force, one fully entitled to a share in the national government. But he can hardly afford to ignore the vocal sectors of the NA that proudly claim to be the heirs of Mussolini. Too often the Fascist blackshirt shows through the double-breasted grey suit Fini drapes over the NA. Fini himself hails *Il Duce* as the greatest statesman Italy has ever had. He further contends that the NA's nationalism "is democratic and European-minded," although he opposes the Maastricht Treaty because it "promotes European integration." Fini claims that Istria and Dalmatia, transferred to Yugoslavia after World War II, "are still Italian lands," although he stops short of endorsing those neo-Fascist representatives who demand the return of the territories before Italy agrees to accept Slovenia (which now holds the territories) as a member of the European Union.

Prime Minister Berlusconi has sought to avoid acrimonious polemics with his coalition partners, but he has firmly upheld Italy's national unity and pledged to exclude from cabinet positions NA representatives who have not clearly disowned Fascist ideology and practices. Berlusconi has made clear also that he will not renegotiate treaties whereby Italy accepted the transfer of Istria and Dalmatia. Berlusconi is determined to win for Italy "the greater role on the international scene that she deserves," notably in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East. He will press this message when President Bill Clinton visits Rome this month to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the city by U.S. troops.

Aroused by the scandals that engulfed Italy's political and economic establishment in recent times, the Italian public last year opted for major structural changes in its political institutions, electoral processes, and law enforcement. But much remains to be done, and most of it will depend on Berlusconi and his *Forza Italia*. Both are untried and unproven in the practice of governing. Berlusconi also has a personal problem: He must divest himself of his huge communication network holdings to do away with any conflict of interest now that he has become head of the government. On broad political and economic issues, it will be up to the new ruling coalition to display the balanced mix of dynamism and responsibility to keep on track the current, complex stage of Italy's "democratic revolution." If it fails badly, the main beneficiaries would likely be the NA on the one side and the PDS on the other, two political forces which for different reasons and to different degrees do not yet appear fully committed to promoting a modern, forward-looking democratic Italy.

LEO J. WOLLEMBORG

Leo J. Wollemborg, an American journalist living in Rome, has previously contributed to Commonweal *on Italian matters.*

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

GENERATIONS AREN'T SEAMLESS

ALTRUISM AMONG THE TWENTY-SOMETHINGS

Some themes seem to be struck in the national consciousness all at once and variations on them appear everywhere. Of late the theme I notice is the discovery of generational differences and generalizations about generations.

Chalmers Roberts, former reporter and columnist, had something of a shock when he told a young newswoman that he began reporting on Washington when Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1933, "probably before you were born," and she replied that 1933 was before *her father* was born (*Washington Post*, May 1)!

Talk of generations swirled around the death of President Richard Nixon. A *New York Times* reporter, scratching for unusual reactions, interviewed high school students and found that to them the Nixon presidency seemed as remote as George Washington's. In fact, they made comparisons between Nixon and Washington!

Features columnist Tony Kornheiser, returning to his *alma mater* after twenty-five years, found, in talking to the university news staff, that they didn't know who Paul McCartney was, let alone who the Beatles were as a group. When he tried to find out what was important to them they talked of cultural diversity and date rape.

He tried to tell them how it was in his college generation: "'The Vietnam War was everything,' I explained. 'Everything. It overwhelmed everything. It defined everything. It made everyone mistrust everyone old because everyone old just wanted to kill them'" (*Washington Post*, May 1). And he coupled the war with the Nixon presidency.

Are generations so sharply divided and so clearly identified?

I thought of that as I looked at the former presidents and first ladies sitting in line

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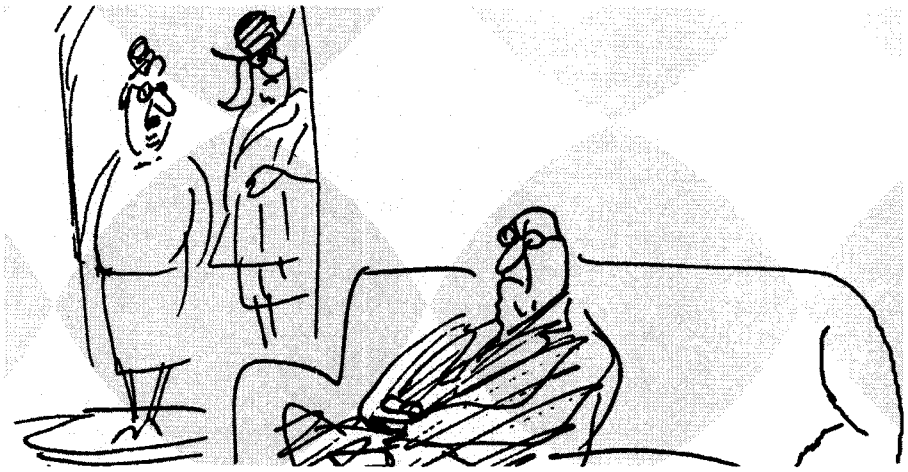

"Chester was mad at the sixties, the seventies, and the eighties—the nineties are on hold!"

at the Nixon funeral, most of whom I had known from the time we were the generation just taking over. Ours, the generation they epitomized, was a generation touched by and just emerging from the Great Depression. We were people rooted in small towns or defined city neighborhoods—or, as in the case of George Bush, in the clan security of the dominant Waspdom. Our regional differences were marked. Our society was stable. And, in the aftermath of World War II, to most of us pride in country and belief in its mission to lead the world were givens. Public service was for us a worthy primary goal until Watergate and the cynicism it engendered.

The generation that succeeded ours (the so-called baby boomers) was mobile and homogenized. The baby boomers were united by television and the fads that swept rapidly across the country. They were the "rock 'n' roll" generation, overwhelming popular culture by their sheer numbers. They were also the children of affluence, and affluence was available to them as they entered their own adulthood. Many were the first of their families to enter the professions. Those who joined the labor force could own their own homes, cars, and boats as a matter of course.

There were bridges initially between the baby boomers and many of their parents' generation in the movements—the civil rights movement, the nascent peace movement, the beginnings of environmentalism. But, as Vietnam became an overriding issue, cracks between the generations became deep fissures. As a result, the boomers sought to create their own communities, experimenting with drugs and with great communal gatherings like Woodstock.

After Vietnam, with the arrival of Reagan and the "me" generation, the tail end of the baby boomers and their children entered a different world—a world of no vision. Government was bad. Self-interest was good.

The disaster of Vietnam had affected the making of all foreign policy. According to the *Economist* (April 30), this handicap was accompanied by a collapse of trust in the institutions and conduct of politics at home: "...The deceptions and crimes that brought Nixon down have...marked American politics to this day. Nixon caused enduring press bolshiness, congressional uppityness, and public cynicism. He was responsible for the general coarsening of public life."

During the Reagan years selfishness became a public virtue. Getting rich was a good no matter how it affected others. The national debt burgeoned. The so-called underclass grew larger in every city. There was indifference to, and general neglect of, those who needed help. (A doctor gave me an interesting instance of this: Only 11 percent of the children are immunized in prosperous Houston, and only 44 percent nationally, while the Indian Health Service demonstrates that 90 percent immunization can easily be reached with only a little public attention and expense. But the general will to do so is not there.)

And now we have the twenty-somethings, the generation called "X"—the generation whose members feel they have missed the boat. Global competition has diminished the national economy. Job prospects are bleak. AIDS shadows their lives. This is the generation that, according to David Brinkley (*Washington Post*, April 3), is the generation of low SAT and LSAT scores, the generation that doesn't read (even the newspapers), doesn't vote, and doesn't believe in the work ethic—the generation to whom we must entrust the future.

But doesn't this summary of the generations ignore the complexities of history and reality as well? Certainly there are commonalities for those who live in the same time. Certainly there are historical and economic factors—sometimes catastrophes—that affect them all, but it must be recognized that they don't all react in the same way.

Chalmers Roberts, mentioned above, despite the double generation gaps, was able to see parallels between the young who came to Washington with Roosevelt and those who have come with Clinton. The latter, in their campaign, signaled their belief that the young could once again bring about change in public policy. In zeroing in on health care, job retraining, housing, and loans to be repaid by community service, etc., they have been trying to remedy the effects of the recent rampant public neglect.

And in the same week nationally syndicated columnists Colman McCarthy and Mary McGrory called attention to the impressive numbers of volunteers to be found in the current generation. Their reports encourage hope and run counter to the stereotype of the generation. According to Eli Segal, director of the National Corporation for Service, 60 percent of college freshmen engage in some kind of community work and continue to do so throughout their college years. And according to James Scheibel, who oversees VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), 4,000 VISTA volunteers serve urban and rural communities in fifty states, and with the help of the Clinton administration, may soon be joined by 1,100 more. As one volunteer told McGrory, "We don't have any wars or large causes. We have to fix things up." In that they connect with those like them in every generation before theirs. There are ways and ways of "fixing up." □

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ANNOUNCING EARLY

A SUGGESTION FOR BILL CLINTON

The time has come for President Bill Clinton to announce that he will not run for reelection in 1996. Taking his cue from Lyndon Johnson's 1968 announcement, he should tell the nation he wants to devote all his energy to working on his agenda: national health care, welfare reform, restoration of economic health.

The effect of such an announcement would be to quiet his conservative critics and cut down the size of their audience. These critics (of whom Rush Limbaugh and the *American Spectator* are the most conspicuous) are motivated by opposition to Clinton's political agenda, but they find that the most effective way to retard that agenda is to attack Clinton (and Ms. Rodham Clinton) personally, by keeping the focus on Clinton sex-and-money problems.

If this personal assault continues, the president, despite his enormous governing skills, will end up with a so-so record of accomplishments; not to mention that he won't be reelected. But if he can quiet his critics, whose audiences won't be so troubled about his personal sins once they're assured he'll be gone after 1996, he may yet accomplish much.

"Bad news, it's Clinton again in 1996."

As I write this, it is the second week in May, only a few days after Paula Jones filed her suit against the president, alleging that he propositioned her back in the days when he was governor of Arkansas and she was a state employee. The details of her accusation, if true, suggest that Clinton has something less than Cary Grant's smoothness when approaching women.

I don't know if the charges are true. Certain of the alleged details are so gross that it is hard to imagine the governor of any state being guilty of them—even a bush-league state like Arkansas, even a governor as horny as Bill Clinton. On the other hand, the charges are consistent with a pattern laid out in earlier allegations.

But if it isn't Paula Jones, then it's Whitewater. And if it isn't Whitewater, it's state trooper revelations. And if it isn't state troopers, its Hillary's cows. And if it isn't Hillary's cows, it's Gennifer Flowers. And if it isn't Gennifer...well, you get the idea.

There's no end to this kind of thing. And from what we've seen of Bill Clinton over the past two years, there's probably more to come. And from what we know of Clinton's enemies, if there's more to come it will certainly be found. And given the nature of the American press today (where tabloid media have the power to force the *New York Times* to cover stories it would prefer to pass up), when it is found, we the public will certainly hear about it.

Oh, I know, I know. An elected official's private sexual conduct is one thing, his conduct in public office something else. As long as Clinton does a good job as president, what do we care what women he meets in motel rooms and back seats of automobiles? In fact, I've made

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the argument myself in this column: once when Gary Hart was forced out of the 1988 race for president, and again when John Tower was nominated in 1989 by President George Bush to be secretary of defense.

I still hold that view. Courage, justice, honesty, industriousness, good judgment, etc.: these are essential virtues for high public officials. Chastity is not. After all, this is America in the late twentieth century; it is not Massachusetts Bay in 1650.

But enough is enough. If Clinton's sex life, no matter how promiscuous it may turn out to have been, were genuinely private, the nation could tolerate it. But I'm very doubtful we can tolerate an endless parade of highly public sex stories about a sitting president. The president of the United States is not merely the head of government (like John Major), he is also the head of state (like Queen Elizabeth). That is, he is a great symbol of the nation, something like the American flag. He is the nation itself condensed and personified. How sullied can a symbol become before it loses its symbolic value?

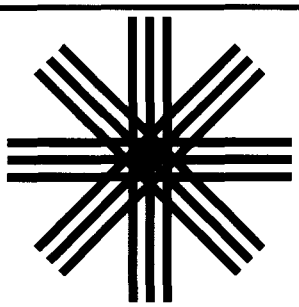
One of the ways we teach children how to be American is to tell them stories of the presidents: Washington at Valley Forge, Lincoln the self-made man, FDR overcoming polio...and Clinton? Though much of his curriculum vitae is inspirational, Clinton is becoming increasingly unavailable for edificatory uses. It is becoming harder to resist the urge to cover the ears of the nearest child when the president's name is mentioned.

Besides, it isn't a matter of philandering only. Whitewater and cattle futures are about money. What's more, the sex stories involve allegations that state troopers assisted Clinton in picking up women. Worse still, the Paula Jones story, if true, is a very serious instance of sexual harassment.

It will be said that none of this has been proven. That's debatable, but I'll waive the point. My complaint is not that these charges have been proven but that we have to listen to them at all, or at least that we have to listen to them without respite for many months at a time. Up till now it has been many months, but eventually, I suspect, it will be years at a time.

Clinton's problem is that he is trying to govern a highly polarized nation, a nation that is rapidly moving toward a condition that might best be described as cultural civil war. He would sincerely like to be the president of "all the people," and by temperament he is suited for this mission. Anyone who can show genuine sympathy for both the gay movement and Richard Nixon, who can show genuine admiration for both Harry Blackmun and traditional Christian values, certainly has a broad reach. Clinton is a friendly, well-intentioned, warmhearted guy. Absent the financial and sexual accusations, he might well be just the person we need to bridge the abyss that divides the Right and Left in this country.

If Clinton would simply announce that he is out of the race for 1996, mean-spirited critics of the Rush Limbaugh and *American Spectator* variety will continue for a while to hurl their abuse. But America is not a mean-spirited country. Fewer and fewer people will pay heed to such critics. □



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The Friars of Atonement announce the fifth annual Graymoor Prize, to be awarded for the best essay on any aspect of ecumenical or interreligious affairs. Our previous winners have reported from England, Wales, Tanzania, Jerusalem, Eisenach, Germany, Strasbourg, and Chicago, among other places. From the Eritrean scholar Yacob Tesfai (1994) to the euphonious Anthea Dove (1993) to the exotic Ty Mam Duw Community (1992) to the formidable Ed Marciniak (1991), Graymoor winners have written about the difficulties as well as the satisfactions, the personal as well as the theological dimensions of ecumenical work. The prize is intended to encourage and support new ecumenical and interreligious ideas and perspectives. The award-winning submission, which may take the form of a scholarly or critical essay or a personal narrative, should appeal to the interests of the general educated reader.

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Deadline: October 3, 1994. Announcement of Prize: December 16, 1994. The prize-winning essay will be published in COMMONWEAL's January 13, 1995, issue. This essay will become the property of the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute. All other essays will be returned to their authors after January 1.

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WHITE DOCTOR, BLACK MUSIC

WHAT GOLDBERG'S MBIRA TAUGHT ME

SONDLO LEONARD MHLABA

I lived in Boston's South End then. Going to Newton for a Sunday afternoon party felt like heading for the ends of the world. How would I get there? I didn't have a car. I would have to take the D Train to Riverside and then walk up Grove Street.

Doctor Jones (not his real name) and his family were wonderful hosts. A couple of the children had grown up in Zimbabwe and could speak Shona—which made me feel comfortable rather quickly. Their father had spent several years practicing medicine in Mount Selinola, a lovely corner of Zimbabwe. There were several other guests, most of them white. This was 1976 and the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front (PF) was still fighting to unseat Ian Smith and establish majority rule. I was a PF member and district officer. The party at Dr. Jones's gave me an opportunity to talk about the PF's political views before what was, evidently, a sympathetic group. I had also been told that Newton had many influential people: "You never know who's in the audience," I thought. I drank several cups of tea and ate more than my share of pastries to ease the initial awkwardness.

The man sitting next to me and caressing a mbira was Doctor Goldberg (not his real name). He was the guest of honor. He had spent some time studying African musicology with an old man in a "tribal village" far from civilization. The old man had also taught him how to play the mbira, a traditional instrument made of a gourd resonator and several tuned metal strips which vibrate when plucked. Dr. Goldberg spoke passionately about how he had tried to get the university in Zimbabwe to grant his village mentor a college degree. The university had no problem awarding Goldberg a Ph.D. in African musicology, but it could not imagine granting a music degree to a ragtag village elder.

I listened with great interest as Goldberg spoke. His sincerity was quite evident and what he said was surprising to me. Even though a black African, I had never thought of our elders as educated individuals. I don't mean to suggest that I thought they were dumb! But educated? Goldberg continued to talk about the mbira and its place in the Shona community. Then he began to play a tune. I shifted, took a gulp of the tea, and shifted again. I was uncomfortable. There was something wrong with this picture: a white man playing a mbira without the slightest sign of self-consciousness. He began to sing; then he strummed harder, looking at the ceiling and jerking his head rhythmically. He sang in country Chizezuru, a language unspoiled by foreign tongues, painting in poetry a landscape of past glories, of children lost to the cities, of hunger where none was before, of victorious freedom fighters and the dawn of a new day. He plucked harder, then went into the nonverbal traditional. "Oh...eeyea...eeyea...eeyea...!"

I...Well, you have to understand....

I had not known a white person until I was a teen-ager. I had

SONDLO LEONARD MHLABA, *a naturalized citizen of the United States, was born and raised in Zimbabwe. A doctoral candidate in law, policy, and society at Northeastern University, he is the director of the Learning Center at Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston.* *The author would like to thank the Jones's and Dr. Goldberg for the experiences described in this article.*

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grown up in a traditional village where the housing consisted of small stick-and-mud huts in which the dirt floors were polished with cow dung. We are talking about a simpler life here; perhaps from a thousand years ago, in a manner of speaking. And I didn't have to be reincarnated.

As a growing boy, I would watch the sun rise like a barrel of burning coal above the distant trees. The more intently I looked at it, the more it seemed to wobble and dance in concentric circles of varying colors. And then, as it rose higher above the sky, it became sturdier and sturdier until it stood still as if waiting for any false moves that my shadow, now safely tucked under my bare feet, might dare to make.

The setting sun was equally beautiful. As it went down it spread gorgeous streaks of gold, orange, and red along the horizon, playing games with my friends and me behind the tall mopani tree that lay in our line of view. Now one ray juts out between the branches; now seven; now half the sun itself. And, as we bent to catch sight of it below the trees, it quickly sank behind Mount Mfazomithiyo, safe from our curious eyes. Dumb sun!

Jean Gallagher

Arches of Bridge Break Ranks* (Or, My New Marriage)

I see them suddenly tumbling but still
—in their disaggregate congregating,
their unpacked, uploosed goings—legible.
The arches are chatty, bustling, jostling.
They are breaking ranks into the real.
They are walking downhill in red-starred chintz.
They are busily, rampantly plural.
What they've lost in stone-solemn elegance
they've gained in a shapely mobility.
The bridge back to more weighty, sterner loves,
though gone, keeps in these ample, clowning curves
a mindful miming of sobriety.
These flippant flatfoot supple jumpingjacks
are stable structures of love's mobile facts.

** A 1937 charcoal-on-cloth by Paul Klee*

We would climb some taller tree and yell in our little minds: "Gotyu!" Eventually, the sun would descend too far down for us to see it, even at this height, and we would lazily make our way down, wishing we could fly up and up and see where the sun goes at night. Another day gone, we would hurry home to help lock up the cattle, goats, sheep, and chickens. Soon, supper time would be over and we would surround the kitchen fire and listen to my grandfather repeat stories of Zulu military exploits.

The white mbira player was tossing me back and forth between that distant past and the present, and the experience was disorienting. I wasn't quite sure why. The white people of my early days had not thought of us as human, certainly not human enough to learn from. And we hadn't thought of them as human either. Our advantage was that we knew what they thought of us, but they seemed genuinely trapped in their own racial supremacist delusions, like three-year-olds who claim to be ten, or to be six feet tall.

My early sense of white people had been heavily influenced by my warrior grandfather. He had fought against them in the 1890s. In 1893, Cecil John Rhodes had brokered a truce at the Matopo hills which the Europeans had declared a victory. But my grandfather had seen this as simply a temporary setback.

My mother was one of only two children of a radical feminist nicknamed Valela and a famous chieftain named Mlisana. With ten wives to his name, Mlisana's nuptial visits to my grandmother had a rather long cycle. But Valela (which means "shut him out") had no problem keeping her own schedule. Born in 1868, she was way ahead of her time. My father, an imposing man with a Zulu warrior demeanor, had a softer side, probably inherited from his Bamangwato mother. In a culture where "real" men didn't eat okra, my father ate okra and there wasn't a man, woman, or child within a hundred miles of Nkenyane who would dare to raise his or her voice at him.

My parents had relatively enlightened views of race and ethnicity, but my grandparents' views were more compelling to us as children. For a while they had me believing that white women, whose hair set loosely on their heads and over much of their necks, had no ears. White skin generated a great deal of discussion among us. Of particular interest was its responsiveness to a simple touch or to temperature changes. I had personally seen it turn red and then back to white in minutes; at times, labyrinths of blue veins could be seen on white faces or arms. White people's lips were very skinny, their noses pointy. While our oily, black faces glistened in the sun, theirs stayed dry. So unusual were white people that mothers scared naughty kids into obedience simply by invoking the threat of bringing around a white person.

Bigotry among our people was rampant. Anyone not of Zulu stock simply was not our equal. "*Umuntu*," our word for "human being," referred only to a member of our group by birth or assimilation. I grew up believing that I belonged to a supe-

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rior race. As a young teen-ager, I had the idea that white boys were soft, literally. In a fight I imagined I would actually sink my fist into what appeared to be their malleable faces. I got a chance to prove my point when one of them called me a pickaninny. I jumped onto him like a tiger, but soon got into trouble and thanked my gods when we were separated and I went home to tend to my wounds and consider my lesson.

I was to learn my other lesson in high school from Joram who was black like me but belonged to what I had been told was an inferior group. He beat me to "first in class" and laid to rest my grandfather's theories of Zulu supremacy.

As years went by, I watched as many white people continued to think of themselves as superior to me or other blacks and to treat us as subhuman. Few of them knew that I had been there; least of all, that their own humanity had been a matter of great doubt to me for many years.

In time, the visions of a democratic, egalitarian society propounded by our liberation movement molded me and many of my colleagues into ardent nonracists and nonsexists. But arriving in the United States in the mid-1960s, I found my new attitude to be at variance with both the emerging Black Power movement and with widespread white bigotry.

In 1976 we were closing in on the white regime in Zimbabwe. Pressure was mounting on us to prepare for a nonracial government, to demonstrate that we really believed in the equality of all people. More importantly, this was a time when many of us were searching our own souls to determine how we really felt about race and ethnicity. Would there be cries for revenge against the whites after independence? Would the Shona and Ndebele collaboration in the liberation war continue after independence?

I personally felt that I had already learned my lesson on that score. The United States of the '60s and early '70s had been a tough place in which to remain open-minded about race. My commitment to building bridges of understanding among peoples had been tested and I felt had been vindicated. Now the mbira player was revealing to me the bitter truth: that I had not changed. I wept.

How could I tell Goldberg why I was crying? How could I tell the rest of the audience? Somebody, please! Why is this African weeping? Would they really appreciate that I was ashamed; that I was sorry; that Goldberg had made me aware of my own residual bigotry, my belief that white people could not truly have empathy for me? Now I knew that, for all my protestations to the contrary, I really had not believed that a white person could be in my shoes; could travel, through my music, beyond the veil of his race and connect his history, his soul to mine. How could I explain my tears?

Now I know, the connections are always there for the picking. Music is not required.

As President Bill Clinton has talked about "growing the economy," I wonder if all of us Americans might not benefit from a concerted effort to "grow" our capacity for empathy and our ability to acknowledge it in others. Might not such an effort reduce our need for the various legal defenses we have placed between each other in the name of "rights"? Might it also make us less likely to brutalize one another?

A few months ago a young Serb soldier described, matter-of-factly, how he and others had been trained to kill defenseless Muslims by use of a special knife rather than wasting scarce bullets. He recalled the plea of a middle-aged man as the soldier pulled his head back to position the throat: "Please don't kill me. I have a wife and young children." But the Serb soldier had no empathy for this man, did not consider him a fellow human being as he cut the life out of him. The history of "man's inhumanity to man" is, by and large, a study in the dehumanization of each other: of believing that the other person is intrinsically different from us; is less human than we are; feels less pain than we would; values life less than we do; will be less missed than we would be; is an inconvenience to us.

It seems to me that our lives are not as different, in essence, as we sometimes believe them to be. We all want many of the same things. Whether we are rich or poor, whatever race or ethnic group we belong to, whatever our gender, physical abilities, or sexual preferences are, whatever religious affiliations we maintain: Most of us just want to play, to laugh, to love, to live our lives, to feed our families, to do something nice for others, and to end our days with someone left to cry for us. Is that too much to ask of each other? If we keep this in mind as we go about our lives, we will be less limiting in our expectations of others and our day-to-day human connections will be full of wonderful surprises. □

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WHY DID CHIAPAS REVOLT?

THE MAKING OF AN EXPLOSION

CHARLES R. SIMPSON
ANITA RAPONE

In Mexico's state of Chiapas, the resistance to economic development without social development has found a popular voice. It is the voice of a Mayan peasant force, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), which appeared in San Cristóbal de las Casas and a handful of other places in Chiapas on January 1, 1994. In their Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle, which accompanied their appearance, the EZLN wrote:

> We are the product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, in the war of independence against Spain, then to escape being absorbed by North American expansion.... we have nothing to lose, absolutely nothing, no decent roof over our heads, no land, no work, poor health, no food, no education, no right to freely and democratically choose our leaders, no independence from foreign interests, and no justice for ourselves or our children.
>
> But we say it is enough! We are the descendants of those who truly build this nation. We are the millions of dispossessed, and we call upon all of our brethren to join our crusade, the only option to avoid dying of starvation!

In their declaration, and in their subsequent communications, the EZLN rejected a system of development where two of every three people in a population of over 3 million never complete primary school. It said "no" to electrification in which the rivers of Chiapas supply power to Mexico City, but a third of Chiapans are without electricity. It rejected a distribution of wealth in which 0.2 percent of the population—billionaires owning supermarket chains and speculators in telephone stock—are richer than half the people of Mexico combined, while half the people in Chiapas have houses with dirt floors. It deplored an economy in which 20 families in Chiapas monopolize the best land, exporting cattle to the United States, while 1,032,000 *Indigenas* possess 823,000 hectares, less than a hectare a person. It denounced a pay scale in which 80 percent of agricultural workers earn less than the minimum salary per day, under five dollars, resulting in 88 percent of indigenous children having growth retardation from malnourishment.

According to Major Sergio of the EZLN, "We want our children to study, to be able to leave, and go to the university." But in his part of the Selva Lacandon, the schools are closed eight out of ten months for lack of teachers. "The government was not going to respect us, and so the armed force began to grow. They obliged us to take the position we take. To meet our needs we must sell our land. And who will buy it? Those who have money. Our children are going to have to return to the slavery of the *finca* and the *patrones* who pay them only two pesos a day."

What has been the process of modernization in Chiapas?

Chiapas does not have a bucolic history. It is part of a region which was depopulated through recurrent plagues of European diseases from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, a tragedy made worse by the *encomienda* system which granted Indian land to the Spanish and concentrated the indigenous population in villages obliged to pay taxes in crops and forced labor. In this roadless and mountainous terrain, both harvest and *ladino* landowners were carried on the backs of Indian porters, people being cheaper transportation than horses.

Nonetheless, the colonial period, whose racial caste system was unaltered by Mexican independence, left two positive results. The first was the identification of the Catholic church with the suffering of the indigenous population. The second was a solidarity among Indians which identified life with the continuity of community and culture, linking both to the fields which made life possible. Today, this syncretism can be seen in the Mayan crosses on Lacandon hills, a Christian cross with pine branches added as a reference to the four directions of Mayan

CHARLES R. SIMPSON *and* ANITA RAPONE *are professors from the State University of New York doing research in Mexico for the year.*

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cosmology. Such crosses, twenty and thirty feet high, are symbolic trees linking the earth to both an underworld and a spirit world, acting as an *axis mundi* around which nature and morality turn. And syncretism can be seen today in Catholic churches, such as the one at San Juan Chamula, where the images of saints take on a double identity as Mayan gods, becoming the object of indigenous as well as Christian ritual.

While the 1910 revolution did not alter economic and political domination by *ladinos* in Chiapas, it did reinforce Indian communal ownership of land through the *ejido* system, which made land ineligible for private sale. At present there are 1,714 communal agrarian communities in Chiapas, controlling 41 percent of the land. But they work their land without much capital or credit. Only 28 percent have farming structures, usually for pigs or chickens, and only 18.6 percent have tractors.

The post-World War II period brought a nationalist economic agenda to Mexico based on tariff protection of Mexican industry and an import-substitution program. Where development competed with rural land redistribution, the former took priority. In Chiapas, rivers were dammed for hydropower transmitted elsewhere. The dam at Angostura created Mexico's largest fresh water lake on land Indians considered to be among their most fertile.

At the same time, the internationalization of agricultural markets accelerated, with coffee and cattle coming to dominate export crops and providing an incentive for land consolidation in Chiapas. By 1980, about a hundred growers—0.16 percent of the 74,000 coffee producers—owned 12 percent of the land. Using impoverished migrant laborers from Guatemala, the large coffee producers have kept wages well below the Mexican legal minimum. Overall, 6,000 families own half the arable land in the state, using it largely for cattle production which produces few jobs.

Beneath these statistics lies a state political process tied to the ruling agricultural elite. This class, controlling the state organization of the near-monopolistic Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI), has systematically evaded the anti-latifundia laws, nominally dividing their estate lands into separate entitlements held in the names of others acting as fronts. For the past twenty years, the Chiapan state government has failed to prosecute *ladino* ranchers who illegally appropriate Indian lands, and who meet Indian resistance with violence. Instead, the state criminal justice system is used to repress Indians protesting the seizure of their lands. The absence of the rule of law has permitted the erosion of *ejido* lands, the growth of a labor surplus, and the maintenance of low rural wages.

As the fertile lower hills of Chiapas were converted to cattle ranches and coffee estates, unsustainable logging practices reduced the Lacandon rainforest to one-tenth its nineteenth-century size. Remaining forest land became the site of colonization, as the government sought to relieve the pressure for land by the poor without redistributing the land of the wealthy.

However inadequate and environmentally destructive this colonization process, even it ended by 1990, when Mexico's

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President Carlos Salinas de Gortari declared that the process begun in the 1910 revolution—the redistribution of land to the poor—had ended. Peasants, many of whom had waited decades for action on their petitions, now had no hope that the political process would end their landlessness. At the same time, the Salinas government eliminated the constitutional protection against the private purchase of *ejido* lands, permitting foreign investors to own and establish the market prices for Mexican land. In such a "free market" in land, a Mexican concession to the process of integrating markets and capital flows capped by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Chiapan poor had no hope of a place.

As a voice calling for social development rather than inequitable economic growth, the Catholic church in Chiapas has played an important role. In the tradition of Bartolome de las Casas, Samuel Ruiz, the current bishop of San Cristóbal, facilitated an important meeting in 1974, the Indigenous Congress, which gave Indians a forum for their grievances. Employing the moral perspective of liberation theology, participants subsequently developed a variety of indigenous organizations. By 1980, three organizations merged to form the Union of Unions of Ejidos and Campesino Groups, whose 4,500 heads of families sought autonomy through alternative models of development. This "development from below" included establishing credit unions; utilizing their own processing, trucking, and marketing system to export organic coffee; and buying a commercial farm where they established a university. Other groups sought to organize coffee and cattle-ranch labor, and others led land invasions along the Chiapas coast. The success of indigenous organizing in the 1970s and '80s brought a backlash. Land takings, or retakings, were resisted by cattle ranchers in bloody confrontations. By the '80s, ranchers had organized a private security force, "white guards," to terrorize peasants. In 1988, the leaders of two indigenous peasant organizations were assassinated.

The underlying debate in Indian communities during the 1980s was over the tactics to be used to reclaim lands. These communities considered their inheritance from the ancient and sometimes recent past, and they discussed organizational forms for promoting Indian economic self-determination and for escaping from the day-labor system. One faction followed a strategy of autonomous economic development. But with the reluctance of the government to break up illegal agricultural estates, the jailing of land invaders, and the increase in "white guard" violence, a faction arguing the need for an armed resistance grew. This faction, rooted in the history of the land struggles of the indigenous communities, became the incipient EZLN.

The pressure on land increased in the 1990s as federal restrictions were placed on the remaining forest lands, much of it *ejido* property, prohibiting the ancient but sustainable practice of burning brush to clear and fertilize fields. According to *La Jornada* (January 14, 1994), by 1990 15,000 indigenous people were in prison on charges related to land conflicts, and in the last ten years over thirty peasant leaders have been assassinated. Conflicts between peasants and ranchers intensified near Ocosingo and Altamirano in early 1993, leading to the military occupation of several Indian communities. According to EZLN spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos, this was a decisive moment, with the Indians dedicating what they could from their 1993 harvest income to buy guns.

The January 1994 occupation of the towns of Ocozingo, San Cristóbal, and smaller communities was an act of "armed propaganda." Government buildings were taken over and federal food stores opened up for the poor. In openly displaying weapons, and what was to become their symbolic black ski mask, or *pasamontaña*, the EZLN asserted that the indigenous communities were already suffering from violence—disease, malnutrition, political exclusion, and economic exploitation—that was as real as and more pervasive than the sudden violence of war. While they did attack the military base of Nuevo Rancho and defended themselves fiercely against a government assault at Ocozingo, their appearance was essentially a dramatic gesture, aimed at redefining the direction of modernization. In placing themselves in a position to be killed by the far larger and better equipped Mexican army, they declared that since they already faced the extinction of the Indian community they had nothing to lose.

The Mexican government, initially unprepared, responded with the commitment of tanks and aircraft, bombed populated parts of San Cristóbal indiscriminately, and retook Ocozingo. The EZLN fell back to the forest where it defends a liberated zone of indigenous communities. Having regained control of the highway system and larger towns, the army set up road blocks and sweeps designed to deny the rebels outside aid. At a point where it appeared the army was waiting only for sufficient reinforcements to carry out a scorched earth policy, the church stepped in to prevent a massacre. Bishop Ruiz agreed to facilitate peace talks between the federal government and the EZLN. With pressure from Washington to downplay the Chiapas events as a regional disturbance unrelated to NAFTA—whose implementation began the day of the EZLN uprising and was explicitly cited in their list of grievances—the Mexican government decided to engage in peace talks with Ruiz as mediator. Following a second round of talks in April, the army has continued to hold itself more or less in place.

The situation, however, has not been static. Peasants, emboldened by the EZLN's armed posture and the legitimacy that the successful public relations campaign of Subcomandante Marcos gave to Indian grievances, seized an opportunity that might never be repeated to negotiate land redistribution from a position of possession. They initiated hundreds of land retakings throughout Chiapas, many far from the liberated zone of the Lacandon Selva. Their occupations were echoed by smaller occupations in other states. These repossessions are always community undertakings, usually involving lands petitioned for over many decades, sometimes to regain land seized by *ladinos* in the early nineteenth century. By early March, the peasant group CEIOC asserted that between 200,000 to 300,000 hectares had been occupied since the beginning of the year.

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Ranchers retaliated by assassinating peasant leaders and calling on the federal government to remove all foreign priests, close the Catholic hospital for Indians at Altamirano, and suspend Catholic church services in Chiapas until Bishop Ruiz was replaced.

There are those in the Mexican government, and in our own, who argue that the armed revolt of the Indian poor in Chiapas is a commentary, however unfortunate, on the *lack* of modernization in this part of Mexico. What is needed, they say, is more private enterprise: A swift opening of the repatriation of profits, state support of private business through public works, and job training. This is the standard neoliberal prescription for growth advocated by the World Bank and proposed by President Salinas. But with Mexico's poor exceeding half the population, a free market of land, resources, food, and labor is likely to bring disaster. Guatemala is clamoring to join NAFTA, adding to the pool of impoverished, surplus labor. There appears to be no floor to regional wage competition. Among the marginalized poor, one can only predict an increasingly desperate scramble for survival.

The revolt in Chiapas, we would argue, has presented a counter-definition of governmental responsibility. It is one based on cooperative responsibility among the members of grassroots communities, and it is based on the desire of these communities to sustain their integrity and cultures. That rebellion in Chiapas could be crushed militarily, and that Indian culture itself can be pulverized by conventional "development" is quite clear. Only the existence of heightened international scrutiny has prevented the first from taking place; only genuine self-determination for the region, a result not-at-all certain to come out of the peace negotiations, can prevent the second. What is less clear but just as critical is what the destruction of the indigenous perspective on place, time, and community would mean for Western society. □

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SCREEN

LOVE IN THE RUINS

'SAVAGE NIGHTS' & 'EPOQUE'

To describe the (presumably) autobiographical hero of Cyril Collard's *Savage Nights* as bisexual is about as helpful as calling the Grand Canyon deep or Mozart musically inclined. Apart from his work as a photojournalist, Jean lives for quick, furtive sexual collisions, and he's dying of them, too. His HIV diagnosis has accelerated his promiscuity, and it seems to have accelerated the tempo of this movie. *Savage Nights* (*Les nuits fauves*) is very sad, indeed, but it must be the speediest sad movie ever made. It hurtles toward its conclusion as precipitously as the hero races to his own extinction. Yet the hero doesn't die. And, as we shall see, his story doesn't really end.

It doesn't develop much, either. How could it? Jean is trapped in the particularly vicious circle dictated by his temperament. He can't come to grips with the fact of his own mortality. The thought of his perhaps imminent demise plunges him into a state of vertigo which he can quell only by pressing someone's flesh against his own. But his realization that he may be infecting others as well as consuming his own dwindling energies pushes Jean further into panic. And so he abases himself again and again under the bridges and in the sidestreets of Paris with riffraff of the worst sort.

From two people he seeks more than sex: the seventeen-year-old Laura, a born self-immolator on the pyre of passion, and Samy, a bit of rough trade not without heart but so short on brains and self-esteem that he has to hook up with neo-Nazis in order to prove his masculinity to himself. Jean ricochets between these two, thereby creating brawls, near-insanity in Laura, and heartbreak all around.

Collard tries to probe his protagonist's nature with a few colloquys between Jean and his parents, between Jean and friends, former lovers, etc., but these dialogues are no more convincing than similar heart-to-hearts in made-for-TV movies. On the whole, though, *Savage Nights* does grip because of two elements.

First, the editing. Collard revives the jump cutting of Godard's *Breathless* and the device has even more utility here than in that classic. At one point, Samy and Laura are verbally assailing each other and their argument seems to be coming to a boil. Then, cut: he is giving her a massage, and the rivals are now so friendly that they come close to making love. In another scene, Jean is calming Laura after a spat and she is subsiding into his arms. Then, cut: she has flung him off and is more sulphurous than ever. What got her going this time? We don't know and we don't have to know. The editing makes us share the emotional discontinuity of these young people, their inability even to sustain moods, much less relationships. Also, these little skips forward in time convey Jean's feeling of racing to his death.

Second, the acting of Romane Bohringer as Laura. Collard as Jean and Carlos Lopez as Samy are better than okay, but Bohringer is spectacular. Misused lovers often turn into monomaniacs and monomaniacs can be boring in life and art, but this actress knows how to render the music of fury and so keeps us watching and listening. In Racine's *Phaedra* the love-possessed heroine speaks of Venus clawing down her victims. There are moments in this movie when Romane Bohringer lets us see the talons sink in.

I have said that the movie doesn't really end, but Collard does try for a satisfactory conclusion. He wants his hero to

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attain transcendence of his agony and so, in the last fifteen minutes, the affairs with Samy and Laura both finished, Jean crosses an ocean and communes with nature. On the soundtrack he tells us that he now feels at one with the world and therefore no longer in a panic about leaving it. I couldn't buy it. Those handsome shots of harbors and canyons have the beauty of a well-made travelogue, not the power of spiritual release.

As good as so much of it is, *Savage Nights* feels, finally, as incomplete as the life of Cyril Collard, who died of AIDS hours before his first and only film received the César (French equivalent of the Oscar) as best movie of 1992.

If there was ever a movie that announced its destination long before arrival, it's *Belle Époque*, which won this year's best foreign film Academy Award.

Fleeing the civil strife of Madrid in the early 1930s, a young army deserter, Fernando, takes refuge in the country house of an old squire, Don Manolo, and soon encounters the gent's four gorgeous daughters—Clara, Violetta, Rocio, and Luz. Before the film is twenty minutes old, we know, we are *meant* to know, that Fernando and the youngest, Luz, are destined for each other. Luz knows this, too, but our hero doesn't: he's ready to fall in love with all four women. The progress of this story is the erotic trek of Fernando into and out of the arms of each of the older sisters until he finally arrives at La Luz at the end of the tunnel of love.

It's a comedy of predestination. Writer-director Fernando Trueba wants us to know in advance how it will all turn out so that we may delight in the details of the romantic journey. The very predictability is meant to be part of our pleasure as we bask in the summery atmosphere of the countryside and take our time savoring the beauty of the women, Fernando's charming ineptitude, the eccentricities of household and neighbors, and the civilized, unhurried pace at which life is taken. It's a leisurely picnic of a movie.

"You are destined for lesser and lesser things."

Perhaps I'm just not a picnic person. My metabolism runs a little too fast for such relaxations and, since I knew exactly where the plot was going, I wanted more surprises in sheer execution: more piquancy in the dialogue, greater subtleties of framing and editing, acting that was not only as adroit as it is but downright virtuosic (though Fernando Fernán Gómez as Don Manolo is magisterial). The first erotic encounter is the best—a precarious, cross-dressed grappling with the lesbian-inclined Violetta, but the subsequent entanglements seem incited by push-button. Trueba himself may have become bored by the machinery of his plot because just before the coming together of Luz and Fernando, the filmmaker completely shifts his focus to the arrival of Don Manolo's opera singer wife and her manager-lover. The subsequent triangle of husband-wife-lover could have composed an enriching subplot but here functions only to kill time before the (mostly) happy ending arrives.

But *Belle Époque* is not all joyous sensuality. The title itself is both ironic and wistful. Trueba sees the early days of the Spanish Republic as the "beautiful age" before the triumph of Franco's dictatorship. And, to remind us of the offstage political tragedy even as we enjoy the onstage farce, Trueba bookends the lighthearted sexiness of Fernando's escapades with two disturbing episodes. At the beginning, the young deserter innocently incites the mutual slaughter of two members of the National Guard. In this brilliantly staged scene that successfully blends farce and horror, the fact that the guards are related to each other by marriage echoes the internecine nature of the Spanish tragedy. Near the end, the village priest hangs himself, apparently because he's been reading too much Miguel de Unamuno. I found this totally preposterous, but perhaps that's because I've always found Unamuno rather bracing. RICHARD ALLEVA

ART

JESUS & MARY IN ETHIOPIA

A DISTINCTIVE CHRISTIAN ART

The first exhibit of Ethiopian Christian art ever to tour the United States (jointly sponsored by participating galleries and InterCultura, Fort Worth, and the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore) is a small but exquisite selection of a hundred pieces, mostly from the Middle Ages. The show is a sampler, illustrating distinct art forms and subjects that developed in a Christian country which was geographically and culturally cut off from the Western world for nearly a thousand years.

The oldest pieces on display are also the smallest. At New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, where the tour opened, I saw fourth-century gold and silver coins inlaid with crosses on one side, the emperor's profile engraved on the other. The coins make clear

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that the imperial house of Ethiopia had already converted to Christianity. Because the faith spread from the top of society downward, Ethiopian Christians were spared the persecutions that befell converts in Rome. Perhaps that is why their early art dwells not at all on suffering, not even the Passion and death of Jesus.

Ethiopia became a theocracy where its rulers heavily influenced liturgical practice. Although Ethiopia, as part of the Eastern church, stressed Mary as the Mother of God, it was a fifteenth-century monarch who initiated the cult of "Our Mother Zion." By fiat, Emperor Yaeqob introduced more than thirty Marian feasts into the liturgical calendar. Along with hymns to Lady Mary and readings from the "Miracle of Mary," prostrations were to be made before her icon.

At the exhibit, one is struck by the artists' preoccupation with Mary. She appears on silver pendants, wooden panels, in Scripture books, hymnals, and psalters. She sits crosslegged, sharing a cushion with the resurrected Christ reigning in glory; she nurses an infant Jesus; she wears luxurious fabrics—velvets and brocades with fleur-de-lis—and is flanked by saints and angels. She stands for prayer, hands open and raised to shoulder height. Such depictions illustrate a uniquely Ethiopian religious development devised in the emperor's court. To produce the number of Marian images required for ritual veneration, the artists of Yaeqob's day must have worked at full speed. Yet, the images on exhibit look anything but rushed.

In fact, Fere Seyon, the only artist singled out in the show, was a monk and court painter under Emperor Yaeqob. Seyon's icons of Mary and the saints, brightly colored, mostly tempera on wood, and well-preserved, show pleasing, round-faced, almond-eyed figures, lavishly painted in deep reds and yellows. The effect is one of warmth as well as contemplation.

Almost startling to behold is Judaism's influence on Ethiopian Christianity. Not only do the Ethiopians circumcise male infants on their eighth day, uphold a man's duty to marry his brother's widow, and observe the Sabbath, but like the Jews in Sinai, they have become peripatetic worshipers. On display is an imaginative set of portable liturgical tools. A coffer, intricately carved from a single block of wood, stores the consecrated altar tablet (of wood, stone, or gold). For Mass, the tablet is removed and set atop the coffer (like a portable table top on a stand); the priest places the chalice and paten upon it. Only the priest may carry the tablet. In procession, he holds it up, draped in fine cloth keeping it from the worshipers' view. The exhibit also contains processional crosses, chalices, patens, and spoons. Artists made wood-panel icons, which would unfold into diptychs and triptychs, small enough to be carried before the congregation or displayed on a stand; some are miniatures.

Rarer still, and particularly beautiful, is a large liturgical fan—a long piece of parchment, more than three-feet high, divided into some thirty panels, six inches wide. Its panels are painted with standing icons, then pleated. For portability, the panels fold between wooden covers, complete with a handle. Much

smaller fans were used in the sixth century to keep flies away from the Eucharist, but the Ethiopians' use of the large fans nine centuries later is not documented.

Curiously, the Ethiopians' claim to share the Davidic line developed late and for political reasons, when a thirteenth-century monarch, hoping to bolster his authority in Byzantium, revised his background. As told, the Queen of Sheba bore Solomon a son, who brought to Ethiopia the Ark of the Covenant and established a new Israel. This Ark still rests inside the nation's oldest church, Saint Mary Zion in Aksun.

Upon their conversion, Ethiopian Christians established a rich monastic life, excelling in Scripture study and calligraphy when the Greek Gospels were first brought to Ethiopia for translation. The magnificent illuminated books on display, however, are from Ethiopia's "golden age," the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Written in Ge'ez, a script resembling squared-off Greek, the pages are framed with geometrical decoration, some topped with intricate headpieces. Sumptuous Gospel books included canon tables (charts of parallel passages) and painted leaves depicting women at Christ's tomb.

In pieces from the fifteenth century onward, one sees with the end of Ethiopian isolation the marked influence of European art in style and subject. Scenes of the Passion and death of Jesus and the raising of Adam and Eve appear. Indian art also exerted influence. A Mary with Indian facial features and hair style appears at her Assumption wrapped in a sari.

The exhibit has moved from New York to the Menil Collection in Houston (April 21-June 19). After that it travels to the Museum of African-American Life and Culture in Dallas (September 28-November 30); the Dusable Museum of African-American History in Chicago (December 23-February 26, 1995); the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk (June 7-August 2, 1995); the California Afro-American Museum in Los Angeles (September 25-October 20, 1995); and the Cleveland Museum of Art (November 14-January 7, 1996).

KAREN SUE SMITH

Karen Sue Smith is the editor of CHURCH *magazine, published by the National Pastoral Life Center in New York.*

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Getting the past right—almost

MEDIEVAL LIVES
Eight Charismatic Men and Women of the Middle Ages
Norman F. Cantor
HarperCollins, $23, 197 pp.

THE FIRST JESUITS
John W. O'Malley
Harvard University Press, $35, 457 pp.

Carl L. Bankston III

Individual humans, out of fashion with historians for the past few decades, have recently begun to make a comeback. Armed with the quantitative techniques of the newer social sciences and inspired by a Braudelian emphasis on geography and environment, academic historians of the post-World War II period increasingly rejected social actors as too evanescent and resistant to measurement to be of interest. Narrative history, the telling of stories about individual actors, was "unscientific," an activity fit only for novelists. As a consequence, the social landscape of the past has often appeared as the earth would appear when viewed from the moon: an abstraction of outlines and contours.

Those who are now attempting to repopulate this historical territory argue that human perceptions and understandings are both the objects and the sources of historical study. Human beings experience social and environmental forces, interpret their experiences, and act according to their interpretations. Historians base their own readings of the past on the social construction of knowledge of the present and try to find some commonality with the dead in order to evoke previous worlds. In such an endeavor, the imaginative and novelistic quality of narrative history becomes an actual advantage.

Norman F. Cantor, professor of sociology, history, and literature at New York University, has made significant contributions to history as the imagined dialogue of people in the present with those in the past. In *Inventing the Middle Ages* (William Morrow, 1991), Cantor used biographical sketches of twenty eminent twentieth-century medievalists to explore the ways in which the personal lives and concerns of scholars have shaped our perceptions of the Middle Ages. *Medieval Lives* takes up the biographical method once again, but this time Cantor attempts to evoke the other voices in the dialogue, those that speak from the centuries-old texts.

The eight medieval people portrayed here were all "charismatic" individuals, men and women known to us because of their special qualities of thought or leadership. The author's goal is to act as translator, to provide dramatic vignettes from their lives that will "...make medieval society and culture meaningful" to modern readers. Proceeding chronologically, he moves from Helena Augusta, mother of Constantine, at the beginning of the era, to John of Bedford at the end.

Cantor places each of the eight in controversy with some opponent and uses their arguments as means of revealing the social and intellectual currents affecting them. This kind of ventriloquism is a delicate business, since speaking through the mouths of others risks reducing them to wooden dummies. Unfortunately, while he writes well, Cantor does not have the skill as a dramatist to avoid this danger. His medieval characters do not even give the illusion of independent life; when Saint Augustine or Robert Grosseteste speak in these pages, their words are transparently those of a modern historian playing with puppets.

This is not simply a dramatic failure; it is a problem of historical interpretation, since it leads the author into jarring anachronisms. Alcuin of York is presented in the early ninth century talking in Gibbonesque terms about "the fall of the Roman Empire." An opponent of the twelfth-century mystic Hildegard of Bingen blasts Hildegard as an exponent

"Speak!"

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of "feminist theory." In translating medieval minds into modern terms, Cantor has lost most of what is medieval about them.

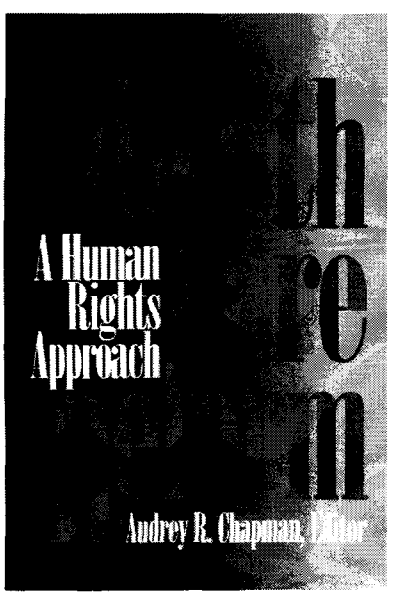
The book is also marred by sloppiness with details. When Augustine is described (probably correctly) as a Berber, the author explains that the Berbers are "people today vaguely called Arab from their language." The Berbers of Northwest Africa are not called "Arabs," except by the kind of people who call Iranians or Turks "Arabs," and their language is Berber.

John W. O'Malley, professor of church history at Weston School of Theology, takes the pursuit of charismatic minds into the era following Cantor's. O'Malley's purpose is the reconstruction of the goals, motivations, and activities of the first generation of Jesuits. His work is aimed at a narrower audience than Cantor's, and the account of the early Jesuits is occasionally a bit dry, but it shows admirable care for detail and enviable mastery of the voluminous documents produced by the early Society of Jesus.

Beginning with Ignatius's abandonment of the military life for a religious one, following a convalescence from an injury received in battle in 1522 during which the founder of the Society of Jesus had nothing to read but the lives of medieval saints and meditations on the life of Christ, O'Malley traces the intentions of the early Jesuits as they flowed from Ignatius's leadership. He finds that the Society of Jesus did not begin with a definite direction and a clear plan of action, as many have maintained. They were preachers, concerned with the care of souls. One of the central concerns of their ministry was teaching people how to pray, a concern that was at the heart of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The Jesuits were drawn into becoming schoolmasters by the usefulness for preachers of the classical discipline of rhetoric, and it was their success at the first Jesuit college at Messina, founded in 1548, that propelled them into the position of pedagogues of Europe.

This story of ad hoc development contradicts the image of the Jesuits as "the pope's shock troops," designed to lead the battle against the Reformation. O'Malley argues convincingly that their ideals were pastoral rather than military. While the Society of Jesus did lead many Protestants back to the church, this was more the result of the appeal of their colleges than because of a strategy of theological warfare.

The First Jesuits does an excellent job of looking back across the centuries to discern and interpret the actions of a small group of charismatic men. There are some subjects one would like to see explored, notably the influences on Jesuit spirituality of the other numerous religious movements of the age. But the book does manage to convey the mentality of those initial shapers of one of the world's most influential religious institutions, and to explain how this mentality and the actions it produced developed from responses to events. Putting people, as sources and interpreters of all social phenomena, back at the center of historical study is a welcome goal of the new narrative history and it is a goal advanced, successfully in one case and rather unsuccessfully in the other, by O'Malley and Cantor. □



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THE PAST NEVER ENDS

PASSAGE TO MODERNITY
An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture
Louis Dupré
Yale University Press, $30, 300 pp.

Diogenes Allen

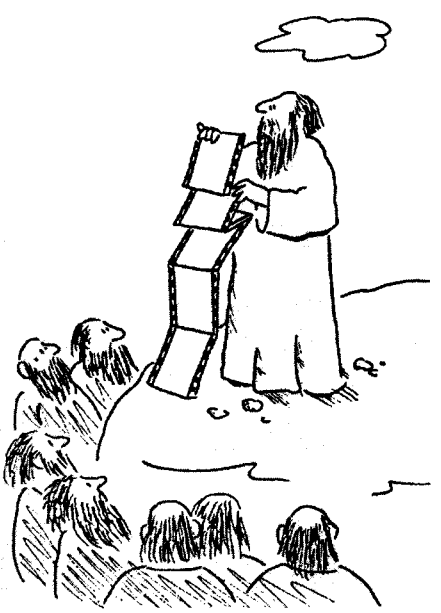
This book takes its place in the impressive body of works that in one way or another treat the modern world as an *event*, whose origin, nature, possible end, and present significance are examined. Some of the best known authors of this genre are Lyotard, Derrida, Richard Rorty, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and Leszek Kolakowski.

Dupré's work is broader in scope and richer in sources than even the wide-ranging works of these authors, partly because Dupré is primarily concerned with the spiritual inspiration of Western civilization. Like Christopher Dawson and Simone Weil, Dupré describes our civilization's loss of spiritual inspiration and hints at ways it may be restored. Accordingly, he considers ancient, medieval, and modern contributions, both secular and sacred, to our understanding of nature, the self, and the divine in order to trace the changes in our understanding of these concepts, their previous interrelations, and their present isolation from each other. The resulting portrayal is of a harmful fragmentation.

Unlike, say, Taylor, who in his *Sources of the Self*, considers matters only from the point of view of their impact on our understanding of the self, or Rorty, who deals with nothing prior to the modern period, Dupré is concerned with our entire civilization, how the event of modernity came about, and its significance for us. As he puts it, "Modernity is an event that has transformed the relation between the cosmos, its transcendent sources, and its human interpreter...rendering all rival views of the real obsolete...forcing its theoretical and practical principles on all but the most isolated civilizations."

Dupré believes that the present deconstructionist reading of the modern world is incorrect. The modern world has not come to an end, *pace* the acolytes of the so-called masters of suspicion, Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud. Rather, there is a need to return to an earlier phase of modern civilization which Dupré indentifies as the period of the classical Humanists and the Reformation, and to once again seek to reintegrate the three main components of Western civilization—God, nature, and the self—which became fragmented during the passage to the modernity of the late seventeenth century. The modern world, in its early phase, sought and failed to reintegrate them, except briefly during the Baroque period in the early seventeenth century.

In presenting this thesis, Dupré sheds light on many subjects. For example, he explains how academic theology ceased to affect and guide our civilization when it became isolated into a separate and narrow science, largely because of the separation of nature and grace begun by the nominalists. Likewise, he explains the present-day claim that all meaning and value come from the human subject, as the result of the loss of God. When God is removed, not only is human significance changed, but so too is nature's. In the realignment that results, human beings replace God as the sources of meaning and significance, and then of course we find that any alleged meaning in nature is humanly imposed. He believes that the stress on human creativity in the Renaissance, although it remained within a religious framework, released a vital force which encouraged this progressive removal of God as the source of meaning and value. The source of fragmentation was not the link of being with *logos* in ancient Greek philosophy, as Derrida maintains, but a progressively impoverished interpretation of *logos* as residing exclusively in the human subject and depriving all other being of its inherent meaning. Dupré, therefore, points out that "the current battle against foundationalism signals a belated awakening from the Cartesian dream, yet combatants all too often remain within the intra-mental premises that started the dream and are thus forced to adopt a skeptical attitude with respect to the epistemological enterprise in its entirety." Rather than being postmodern, by retaining the intramental premises of Cartesianism they remain fixed in an early phase of the modern period. Finally, Dupré's account of the progressive isolation of nature and grace, and the treatment of spiritual theology, which are rarely, if ever, mentioned in philosophical studies, greatly illumine the passage to modernity.



Clearly, Dupré has written an important book. His historical approach is more than an historical account of the breakdown of an earlier organic connection between the divine, nature, and humanity. It is an extended philosophical argument against those who have dismissed in principle all attempts to achieve a new synthesis by showing the source of their resistance to be an assumption that the present fragmentation is normative, rather than a phase in a continuing historical development of Western civilization. But Dupré does not himself make any attempt at a synthesis,

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nor does he consider any contemporary efforts to do so, even though he mentions with praise the work of Whitehead. It would not have been amiss were he to have cast at least a glance at twentieth-century efforts, such as the works of Simone Weil, which are very fresh, deep, and suggestive. At any rate, the door should now be more open than ever for such creative, synthetic efforts at a religious reading of nature, history, and the self with Dupré's impressive philosophical-historical argument added to related ones by Kolakowski, Taylor, and MacIntyre. □

IN BRIEF

VOICES FROM THE CATHOLIC WORKER, BY ROSALIE RIEGLE TROESTER, *Temple University Press, $49.95/ 22.95 (paper), 697 pp.*

From 208 interviews and 6,600 transcribed pages, Rosalie Riegle Troester has compiled and edited what she calls "an oral history of the Catholic Worker." Using only 7 percent of her interview material, she still has assembled a hefty book. Troester, who teaches English at Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan, was a Vietnam-era peace activist and a friend of the old Saginaw Catholic Workers. *Voices* was inspired by the work of Robert Coles and Studs Terkel, who offers an enthusiastic recommendation on the back cover.

Giving some shape to this mountain of words must have been a daunting task, but the result is an admirable piece of work. Troester arranges interview excerpts around key topics, presenting much of the book as an imaginary roundtable discussion. Since no interview seems to appear in its entirety, the key disadvantage is that we can lose a sense of the individual speaker. We don't hear enough, at any one time, of some voices. Inevitably, some of the chapters and sections are more focused than others. The chapter "Memories of Dorothy Day" is particularly good and left me wanting more. Troester conducted her interviews between 1986 and 1991, and the more recent past gets more attention than the old days. The often-neglected Worker houses outside of the New York "motherhouse" also get a lot of attention, and help give a fuller and more accurate picture of the movement. Given Troester's eclectic presentation it might help to think of this book as a tasty stew or great fat pudding, full of tasty morsels or generously studded with sweet treats.

Catholic Workers are a likable and admirable lot as depicted in this book. Some I know personally, having been involved in the Worker myself, and most of the others I would like to meet. They are generous and serious, some are wise and holy, some are raucous, and most seem quite sane in spite of it all. Only a few seem a bit grim and self-righteous.

Voices includes sections on history and the founders, the daily work, community life, the farms, and the problems of Catholic Worker families. The concluding sections explore the Catholic Worker's relation to the church and internal disagreements about homosexuality, abortion, and women. These issues are interesting but also unsettling, and offer something of a downbeat conclusion. Not all Catholic Workers are Catholics, but most still are. A few express some rather stunningly heterodox opinions. My impression, perhaps my wish, is that the disagreements are exaggerated. Troester's choice of voices here seems skewed to what may be her own preferences in these matters.

The importance of Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, and the Catholic Worker movement in twentieth-century American Catholicism is no longer much disputed. For those friends, critics, seekers, and scholars who continue to be interested in this still lively movement, this big book holds many pleasures.

ROBERT GILLIAM

REVIEWERS

CARL L. BANKSTON III, *a historian and sociologist, teaches at Tulane University.*

DIOGENES ALLEN *is the Stuart Professor of Philosophy at Princeton Theological Seminary, and author of* Christian Belief in a Postmodern World.

ROBERT GILLIAM *worked at the New York Catholic Worker and is now a librarian at SUNY Brockport.*

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You could look it up

Lawrence S. Cunningham

As readers of these notes should know, I have a soft spot for reference books. Pye's is a one-volume dictionary of terms from the various religions of the world. Anyone contemplating such a lexicon recognizes immediately that the editors need to be ruthlessly selective in what to omit and equally rigorous in holding writers to word limits. This dictionary omits proper names, but is not evenhanded on personal titles. For instance, Pye gives us a definition of "Buddha" (which is a title) but not "Christ" (which is also a title). Likewise, there is an attempt to provide entries that cut across religious traditions (e.g., "mysticism" and "myth") but in an uneven fashion (there is no entry on "monasticism" or "asceticism"—terms amenable to transreligious treatment). In a few places, brevity does not enhance understanding. The entry "dying-and-rising-god" describes vegetative gods whose death/rising mirrored the seasonal cycles. The entry then ends on this enigmatic note: "In no case is this proven." What the "this" refers to defeats me.

The Continuum Dictionary of Religion, *edited by Michael Pye, Continuum, $34.95, 319 pp.*

One could go on and on. This is an *adequate* dictionary and the entries refer to a bibliography at the end where more information might be gleaned. On a scale from one to ten, ten being the top, I would judge this dictionary to be about a seven.

The study of spirituality is part of any serious theological curriculum. What has been needed, especially for those who use classic texts from the spiritual tradition, is a brief history of the Christian spiritual tradition in order to orient students and contextualize their reading. For that reason I welcomed Holt's little book as one that I might put in the hands of my students as background reading. It is not a perfect text, but it is quite "user friendly." Each chapter ending has a modest list of further readings, as well as some practical hints on how to put into practice what one has learned.

Holt takes a straightforward historical approach, even though it is clear that spirituality is not simply history. In very brief chapters he moves from the world of the Bible through the patristic, medieval, Reformation, modern, and contemporary periods, with an eye on the varieties of Christian traditions, Orthodox, Catholic, Reformed, and Evangelical. In a panorama this broad it would be natural enough if some elements of the tradition get skewed and some judgments could be questioned: The Jesuits are not monastics, Trappists do not have a "vow" of silence, etc. Some readers might also want to "correct" his rather linear approach to the history of spirituality by reading Philip Sheldrake's estimable *Spirituality and History* (Crossroad, 1992) which was not available to Holt as he wrote.

Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality, *by Bradley C. Holt, Augsburg, $8.99, 150 pp.*

These minor irritants, however, should not detract from the value of the book. In an easy and readable fashion, it provides a quick survey of the history of spirituality. I may pay it the compliment of requiring it for background reading for my course on spirituality. It is, however, a book for the beginner; a more thorough historical survey is as yet a desideratum.

Macquarrie, now emeritus from Oxford University, is a profoundly satisfying theologian. This little book on spirituality, first published in 1972, has recently been reissued with some additional essays. The text still smacks of the 1970s with its references to "religionless Christianity," but is well worth reading. Macquarrie is an extremely accomplished theologian, a true person of the church, and unafraid of swimming against the tide. He sees the Christian life as founded on three pillars: doctrine, worship, and deed. Keeping those three in some kind of healthy tension is absolutely necessary if one is not to fly off into spiritual quagmires: deeds without worship end up as pious social work while worship without grounding in doctrine runs the risk of sentimentality.

Paths in Spirituality (2nd. edition), *by John Macquarrie, Morehouse, $10.95, 168 pp.*

At the heart of Christian spirituality (Macquarrie is in reaction against those who too exclusively root themselves in the Word) is the Eucharist, and Macquarrie has some fine words not only on the litur-

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *is professor and chair of the department of theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

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gy but also in defense of such "extensions" of the liturgy as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. His chapter on prayer is one of the finest in the book. For Macquarrie, prayer is a kind of "thinking"—a thinking which is passionate, compassionate, responsible, and thankful. The working out of those motifs is worth the price of the book.

At a time when there is so much psychobabble and Jungian sludge passing for spirituality it is comforting to see a genuine theologian turning his attention to the nexus between doctrine and praxis. Some of this book shows its age as well as its preoccupation with the life of Anglicanism (although Macquarrie is an authentically ecumenical thinker) but it contains much wisdom and well repays a close reading.

Given the mountains of books published on the New Testament, the person who merely wishes to "keep up" or even frame some coherent answer to the biblical question "Who do they say the Son of Man is?" might find Cook's little catechetical work helpful. Cook is a theologian with at least one foot in pastoral ministry.

Responses to 101 Questions about Jesus, *by Michael Cook, S.J., Paulist, $8.95, 124 pp.*

He has a sense of what people ask about Jesus and the New Testament. Did those miracles happen? Why did Christ die on the cross? Is Jesus meaningful for the big world we live in today? Without patronizing, Cook answers these and similar questions by re-presenting the best of biblical scholarship combined with a genuine sensitivity to the pastoral needs and concerns of people.

Who might find this book useful? I'm not sure that it would make a coherent textbook in Christology, but both individuals and religious educators might find it helpful as a resource book and as a model for presenting the faith. Its most conspicuous merits are a blend of biblical scholarship, fidelity to the tradition of the church's teaching, and an ear for the kinds of questions people ask. As the introduction says, there is a need to "recontextualize" the long theological tradition of Christology (which runs from the Johannine literature through the councils down to our own day) in terms of what the earliest witnesses tell us about Jesus the Christ. Cook does that at a level which the alert layperson will find useful and the religious educator more than useful. The book concludes with a very brief glossary, a short bibliography but, alas, no index either of scriptural quotations or topics.

My colleague, Catherine LaCugna, has had the happy idea of soliciting a number of prominent American Catholic theologians to write essays on the traditional theological tracts from the perspective of a feminist hermeneutic. In other words, what these theologians have done is reflect on some classical theological themes (Trinity, church, sacraments, etc.) from the perspective of their own experience as Catholic women and "marked by the Catholic concern to be in continuity with the Christian tradition as much as possible, indeed, to search to the fullest extent for liberating elements within the Christian tradition." The "as much as possible" signals that there is operative in these essays both a hermeneutics of trust and one of suspicion.

LaCugna, quite explicitly, organized her book in such a way that it could be used in university/seminary courses. Each chapter combines both systematic and historical elements and ends with an annotated bibliography for further study.

This work is another of those markers which tell us that the theological enterprise is undergoing a sea change. The very questions raised by these theologians not only are new questions but they undercut the previously impermeable walls of the traditional theological tracts. LaCugna herself reads Trinitarian theology in such a manner as to make applications to everything from ethics to anthropology, while Anne Carr's exemplary essay on method raises fascinating questions about everything from ecclesiology to theological authority.

Most compelling for me is the way in which (spiritual) experience is called into play to restate theological issues. Thus Mary Catherine Hilkert appeals to apophatic spirituality to assure us that not everything is (or can) be said of the mystery of Christ, just as Elizabeth Johnson evokes the sophia strain of Christology to set before us Jesus the Christ who is the Wisdom of God. Again, Susan Ross invites us to think of sacramentality in terms of embodiment, as does Lisa Sowle Cahill from the perspective of ethics.

What struck me over and over again reading these essays was the fresh biblical perspectives they provided, beginning with Sandra Schneiders's excellent reflection on biblical theology: a topic which has been the subject of her thinking for some years now. One of the lasting contributions of liberation theology is the insight that biblical texts look quite different depending on where they are read or who reads them. That is surely borne out by a close engagement with this book. Let me just cite one example. Mary Aquin O'Neill notes that the subservience of women to men in marriage ("Your desire shall be for your husband/and he shall rule over you"—Gen. 3:16) comes as a result of the Fall. If we believe that in Christ we are a "new creation," then the mending of the Fall would seem to be also a falling away of subservience. To think through the implications of that sheds new light (at least it does for me) on a whole range of issues.

Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective, *edited by Catherine LaCugna, HarperCollins, $18, 266 pp.*

I think that theologians who teach the standard curriculum in Catholic theology (as well as their students) would benefit from a reading of these essays. Indeed, it would strike me as a dereliction not to be conversant with what these theologians add to the theological enterprise as they teach us how to bring forth "old things and new." The clarity of the prose might also entice those who are not theologians to use this work to see what some of the newer voices in Catholic theology are doing. □

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

include the unitive, erotic aspect of marriage as well as the procreative. That married couples often engage in sexual acts when conception is impossible underlines the need to look positively at this aspect of marriage. The Vatican's refusal to consult with married laity continues to have profound consequences in the church and in a world that yearns for an integrated view of human sexuality.

I cannot, however, accept Ms. Callahan's position on homosexuals. First, I am not aware that "almost everyone on all sides agrees that homosexuality is not freely chosen but a given condition." Isn't it true that each of us has both masculine and feminine characteristics?

But even if we could find a scientific answer to what makes one a homosexual, the question would remain as to what constitutes a Christian marriage. Ms. Callahan has moved radically away from the procreative aspect in endorsing homosexual marriage; in doing so, she has taken a position that is ironically close to the Vatican's in that both tend to exclude one aspect of marriage.

Tradition, Scripture, and common sense honor the idea that marriage as an institution includes the procreative aspect, and it is in this context that the sexual act takes place. Erotic homosexual behavior cannot relate to physical creation in the same way, even if children are adopted. If we abandon the procreative aspect in order to affirm the richness of erotic love, don't we slip into the either-or mentality of the Vatican, and build another roadblock on our way to a fuller understanding of human sexuality and the nature of the family?

JOHN CLANCY

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Setting Sidney straight

Houston, Tex.

To the Editors: Sidney Callahan's approval of gay marriage surprised me. But—in contrast to the recent ruling by the supreme court of the state of Hawaii, which legitimated such unions on the basis of the equal protection clause of the state's constitution (whose authors never dreamed that their words would be used to justify homosexual marriage)—Ms. Callahan does offer reasons for her stand. Let me address her arguments.

Whether homosexuality is "natural" or even genetically induced is not dispositive of the moral question. Neither is the existence of loving, faithful, and committed homosexual relationships. As John Paul II argued so cogently in *Veritatis splendor*, the morality of a human act is determined by both the intent of the actors and the nature of the act. We are therefore brought back to the nature and significance of homosexual genital activity.

Such activity is clearly not paradigmatic in Scripture or tradition; the man-woman relationship is the paradigm offered us. There is little mention of homosexuality, except negatively, in Scripture; it was taken for granted that it was a deviation from the norm. It is true that Saint Paul's condemnation of the practice was directed at the vice with which homosexuality was culturally involved in the ancient world, and that he never addressed the moral question posed by the existence of loving, stable homosexual unions. Today, in a different cultural climate, we can at least differentiate out-and-out vice from the possibility of committed gay and lesbian relationships rooted in love. But that still does not take account of the deep human symbolism found in the scriptural model for sexual relationships.

The final meaning of heterosexuality, and the reason for holding it superior to homosexuality, is that it is open to life, to family, to the future—and this symbolism holds true even for marriages that are sterile or whose parties are beyond their procreative years—but not for gay or lesbian unions. Because a society's most important function is to pass on its life, heritage, and values to the future, it should protect and promote only heterosexual marriage and family. The most homosexual unions should get from society is tolerance and the right to be left alone.

PETER J. RIGA

Right on target

Tracy, Calif.

To the Editors: Your columnist Sidney Callahan was right on target re gay marriage. I also think she has been right in her views on feminism, birth control, abortion, women priests, and militantly anti-Catholic gays. She pursues truth only, and can't be labeled "conservative" or "liberal," and that is why she catches heck from all sides. No doubt her positive views on gay marriage will attract the ire of many staunch traditionalists, especially those who feel they possess metaphysical blueprints for sexual activity. Well, I for one applaud her: Sidney for Pope!

ANDY GALLIGAN

The author replies:

My thanks to all who are willing to enter the discussion and reason together instead of simply calling names and dismissing arguments over "perversion." While Rev. Frowin Brownfield may think the discussion of homosexuality is a waste of time and energy, it is a discussion that's unavoidable today. And whether he will or will not enter the discussion, the question

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of the morality of homosexuality will eventually penetrate southwest Missouri and more fundamental Protestant churches.

My main problem with his letter is that he claims "morality has nothing to do with emotion," thereby ruling out not only an essential characteristic of all human thinking, but denying Christian love and joy as well. I have written a book (*In Good Conscience: Reason and Emotion in Moral Decision Making*, HarperSanFrancisco) defending the role of emotion in moral discernment so can say no more here, except that morality has everything to do with emotion.

John Clancy accuses me of sounding like the Vatican, but I don't agree that either the Vatican or I have excluded one aspect of sexuality. Yes, procreative and unitive dimensions are both crucial aspects of marriage and sexuality. The question is whether the procreative impulse can be psychologically and socially present when physical reproduction is impossible. If not, then infertile, sterile, postmenopausal marriages, or indeed the marriages of those who are injured and incapable of genital intercourse, must be considered unacceptable.

As for whether it is true that homosexuality is not freely chosen, all I can say is that at this point most experts do agree that this is true in most cases. So maybe the experts are wrong and we will find out differently, but it seems most unlikely. Clancy's query about everyone having both male and female characteristics does seem correct when it comes to gender identity, but gender identity (or the individual sense of maleness or femaleness) should not be confused with the sexual orientation of one's erotic and sexual desire.

Finally, Peter J. Riga, who is a formidable opponent, brings us to the crux of the question with his talk of what is "paradigmatic" in Scripture and tradition. This is exactly the issue; we now recognize that paradigms in moral theology change and develop just as they do in science. And we also change our understanding of the "deep human symbolism" found in certain scriptural models. Who today defends the divine right of kings on the basis of scriptural symbols of kingship and the kingdom?

Paradigms and symbolism change, not so much by repudiation and denial, but by extension, by refinement, by discerning underlying and more essential truths in a model or symbol which has been heretofore interpreted in a too absolute or limited way. Jesus seemed to fulfill the law by reinterpreting what was essential in Sabbath rules and traditional "taken for granted" ideas of ritual purity and cleanliness—particularly about the body.

I agree with Peter Riga that society's task is to "pass on its life, heritage, and values to the future" but disagree that to do this properly, "the most homosexual unions should get from society is tolerance and the right to be left alone." Can we even call it tolerance when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith teaches that homosexual acts "confirm within themselves a disordered sexual inclination which is essentially self-indulgent" and that to abandon homosexual activity is a "conversion from evil"?

Well, I am willing to learn, to change, and even to recant if shown how I am getting things wrong. But more convincing arguments must be forthcoming.

SIDNEY CALLAHAN

More from Chiapas

Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico

To the Editors: I would like to commend you for publishing the early and incisive reports on events and conditions in the Mexican state of Chiapas by Alberto Huerta, S.J. ["Lawless Roads Still: The 'Red' Bishop of Chiapas," December 17, 1993; "In Chiapas, Long Shadows," May 4]. On the basis of a recent nine-day visit to the region, our second in fifteen months, we can confirm the importance of the role played by Bishop Samuel Ruiz García in his encouragement of leadership development among the poor of Chiapas, the poorest of many poor states in Mexico. It is important as well that, unlike other bishops, Samuel Ruiz refused to condemn the Zapatistas. Rather, he told the catechists and deacons they had to choose: If your conscience tells you to join the armed rising, he said, cease to be official church representatives.

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We wish also to report our experience in Altamirano, a city of 10,000, one of four captured by the Zapatistas, who presented their case there publicly, without destruction or looting, before retreating to their mountain villages.

Few Chiapas communities now have armed soldiers within; not so in Altamirano, which is close to the Zapatistas' forest sanctuary. The tension was pervasive, not only because of the tanks and soldiers, with their automatic weapons and chests decorated with grenades, but because of the presence in numbers of *coletos*—non-indigenous members of the ruling class who have grown up dominating the region through their wealth, arms, and control of local governments; for many of them *indios* constitute a kind of expendable animal species.

Our mission was to visit San Carlos Hospital in Altamirano, which serves a scattering of some 647 villages and 15,000 people. The *coletos* and the army want the eight nun-nurses gone; the five doctors had already fled. The hospital had treated wounded Zapatistas and released them before the armed forces occupied the city.

Before we arrived the three Chiapas bishops had met with the *coleto* leadership asking them to end their contrived protests and overt threats against the Mexican nuns. The next night the town-appointed watchman was beaten. Then a truck from the Vincentian motherhouse in Mexico City was ransacked of its food and medical supplies. For the forty-four persons housed within the compound, including young women being trained as nurses' aides, shortages have become a problem. The army observes constantly through binoculars.

We asked the nuns what they fear most. They reply: "What happened in Ocosingo!" In that city the army entered the hospital and murdered patients and their visiting families. We asked how we could help. Their spokeswoman replied, "Tell everyone you can. We have two doctors from Doctors without Frontiers for one month. Maybe we could get a Witness for Peace person to stay with us?" This letter is one of the ways we are responding to their request.

JIM and JOANN LAMB

Jim Lamb teaches comparative sociology in the Instituto Tecnologico y de Estudios Superiores in Cuernavaca; Joann Lamb works with women's groups sponsored by the International Grail Movement.

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The family that fights together...

WILLIAM HOUGHTON

I always liked doing things together as a family—gathering for dinner, summer vacations at the lake, going out to buy the Christmas tree—but I knew that the true and necessary balance to togetherness was the time you had to strike off on your own, even if it meant an argument.

My dad was a crusty general practitioner with strong opinions about politics and personal morality. He easily flared into anger, and as a small boy I dreaded his criticisms. Watching from behind a curtain, I once saw him become so enraged at an uncle that he lunged across a room and took a swing at him. He sometimes cut people off for years. Although he toiled with care to treat his patients, did delicate surgery gently, and magically shaped a charcoal sketch into a three-dimensional portrait, when roused to anger he was wild and, in my eyes, an unpredictable animal. I lived in dread of his turning his ministrations on me.

My father wanted me to follow in his footsteps. In high school and the first few years of college, I told him and others that I might become an English teacher, or even that "I will be a bum, and hitchhike around the country." I knew how to get his goat. Then he would lean more heavily on me, and urge me to at least try medicine (as if it were a one-semester course). When the end of college drew near and I realized that being a bum would not really satisfy me, I decided to apply to several medical schools. But then the conflict between my father and me shifted to a more complex terrain.

He insisted on reading the applications I had filled out, to be sure I had not said the wrong thing. I was determined not to let him. Partly I wanted to hide one particular application to a prestigious Eastern school in which I had mentioned "bear hunting" as one of my favorite leisure-time activities, so desperate was I to be colorful, even though I have never done any sort of hunting. But mostly I wanted to stand for a principle, against my father, that the application would be entirely mine.

We sat across the kitchen table from each other and he glared at me. "Bill, you must let me see those forms." I shook with fear that he would leap across the table and grab my throat, even though I knew he probably wouldn't. I drew in some of his own intensity and said as strongly as I could, "No. The envelopes are sealed and I will not open them." He relented, and I mailed the applications uncensored.

That was the day I cut free and began to stand tall as my own person. To my surprise, I saw I had the power to make him back off, and once that happened, we began to respect each other as equals. It was only then that I became free to appreciate his good qualities. It would not have happened if we didn't argue, approach violence, and break the bond of togetherness.

My applications went well enough; there were acceptances (including the Eastern school); and I have stuck with medicine since then. Only long after did I realize that my father had given in gracefully enough, and I began to wonder whether he was half as ferocious as I had thought him to be. I saw that the bit of freedom I had snatched with those envelopes was relatively small compared to my larger loyalty to him.

After I married, I thought I was through with fights and growing up. Then my wife and I repeated the same process with our children. Sure, we were close and cuddly when they were little, but even then, sometimes when I wanted to hold one of their hands crossing a busy street, they would shake me off. When they became adolescents, they turned into willful beasts, who called out the beast in me. My oldest daughter specialized in slamming doors. The walls shook, the windows rattled, and the silence that followed left our hearts pounding. At fourteen, she insisted on traveling a great distance to a concert in a high-risk neighborhood. I yelled that I would lock her up. She screamed that she would take an overdose. I was appalled at her behavior, and at mine. I was afraid of the father in me: Was I turning into *him*?! That went on for years, she and I each won a few rounds, and both of us came to feel freer and tougher.

My son drew the line on any room-cleaning, and then on any mutual agreement for a curfew. He was defiant in his efforts to break free and take his own stand. My wife and I were furious at his betrayal and pigheadedness, and the familiar fear of violence and rupture pounded in my ears. We battled that way for several years, nearly coming to blows, till he moved apart and set up his own digs. The ultimatum, "comply, or exile," seems the logical endpoint young adults are seeking. It is an "out" for them from too much closeness. Once the stakes are set and the rage at external control is expressed, the air is cleared and everyone breathes more easily, whether they move on or not.

My wife and I got plenty of experience in the art of giving in, but tried to hold on to a few tattered, eternal principles. After four or five years of battle—it only seems like the Thirty Years War—the offspring and parents can feel separate and equal. Once again there are times when we now feel warm and together. I see that they now want to stand next to me, not holding my hand, but free to reach out if they want to.

It would be nice if separations were calm and rational, but the violent feelings and the threat of physical violence were a part of my growing up, and of my children's, too. That's the way we hatched into separate people. The challenge—and one we did not always meet—was to sit down at the table and fight it out. Those fights were the work that earned our closeness. □

William Houghton is a physician from Milwaukee.

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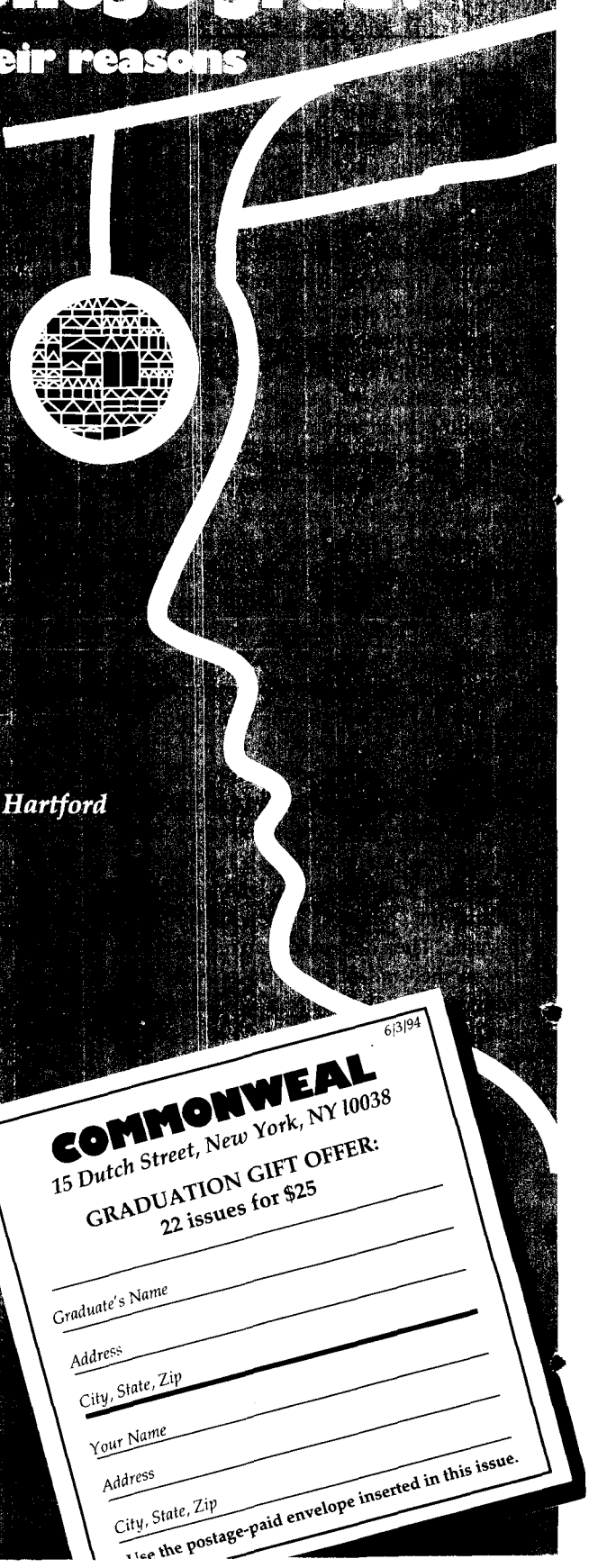

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